ADVICE

FROM

A LADY OF QUALITY

TO

HER CHILDREN;

IN THE LAST STAGE OF

A LINGERING ILLNESS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

S. GLASSE, D. D. F. R. S.

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

VOL. II.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

GLOCESTER:

PRINTED BY R. RAIKES.

FOR R. FAULDER, NEW-BOND-STREET, LONDON.

M.DCC.XCIV.

BRITISH LIBRARY
30
NOV
14

ADVICE

FROM A

LADY OF QUALITY

TO HER

CHILDREN.

CONFERENCE X.

ON FEMALE CONDUCT.

I HAVE long wiſhed, my dear Daughter, for this opportunity of freely converſing with you on ſubjects of the utmoſt conſequence to you. Your youth, the world into which you are going, the ſnares which it lays, and the few days which I have yet to live, all induce me to open my heart to you, and to give you ſome inſtructions relative to your dangerous ſituation.

If you could poſſibly entertain a doubt of my affection, the effort I am now making, when my ſoul is bowed down with ſickneſs and ſorrow, and ſees nothing before it but the horrors of the grave, muſt needs convince you how earneſtly I wiſh to ſecure your happineſs. My wiſhes will never be realized, but while you are careful to lay down proper rules for your conduct, and ſuffer nothing afterwards to tempt you to break through them.

If you are ſo unhappy as to give yourſelf up to the diſtraction of the world, you will no longer be able to maintain the dominion over your own heart: you will live an utter ſtranger to yourſelf; and there will not be a ſingle day, which you will know how to diſpoſe of in a proper manner. The world is never to be ſatisfied; the more we beſtow

beſtow upon it, the more unreaſonable are its demands.

YOUR ſex requires the utmoſt circumſpection; what among *men* is reputed a venial fault, is an abſolute crime with us. There are a thouſand things ſaid and done in our company, which a woman ought neither to hear nor ſee. I would wiſh that a young woman ſhould be ſilent and modeſt; and the world, diſſipated as it is, expects the ſame. Its judgment of us is very ſevere; and that judgment often fixes our character for life.

IF you are over-ſolicitous to pleaſe others, you will run into a ridiculous affectation: you muſt make yourſelf agreeable to every one you converſe with, without letting them ſee that you are thinking about it. Nothing pleaſes which is not natural. A woman, who

ſets herſelf to draw the attention and admiration of all upon her, will ſoon become an arrant coquette, if ſhe is not one already.

It is only a natural and virtuous behaviour, which will ſecure to you eſteem and approbation: if this ſhould not ſucceed, ſo much the worſe for thoſe you meet with. Whatever happens, this truth is indiſputable; that one of the brighteſt ornaments of the ſex is modeſty: and that a young lady can never appear to greater advantage, than when ſhe is utterly diveſted of affectation in her behaviour.

Do not confound the ideas of modeſty and timidity; the one pleaſes, the other diſtreſſes; we cannot avoid being hurt, when we ſee a young perſon confuſed and diſconcerted. There is ſuch a thing as an ingenuous confidence, which ſhould make

make you not unwilling to ſpeak, when the ſubject requires; and to ſing or dance, when a proper opportunity preſents itſelf. If you are not vain, you will not be timorous to a fault.

I SHALL be very ſorry for you, if ever vanity takes poſſeſſion of your heart; for then, inſtead of being condeſcending and agreeable, you will be always unhappy in yourſelf, and your boldneſs will only ſerve to make you ridiculous to others. A diſdainful carriage is that of a perſon of mean talents, and a bad heart; people of quality are leſs apt to aſſume it, than thoſe of an inferior rank. We ſeldom endeavour to ſet ourſelves off by pride, but when we have no other means of diſtinguiſhing ourſelves; this is a ridiculous affectation, which the world always laughs at, but never forgives: the more humiliating our behaviour is to

others, the more pleaſure do they take in letting us down.

AFFABILITY will even ſupply the want of thoſe qualities, which you do not poſſeſs: it is the beſt apology that I know for little imperfections. Great allowances are always made for one, who has no pride or pretenſions to ſuperior merit: but ſelf-love naturally raiſes in us an oppoſition to arrogance and preſumption. Many women have become the ſubjects of ſatire, only by their haughty behaviour. Your figure is not without its ſhare of elegance; and the handſomer a lady is, the more ready people are to ſuſpect that ſhe is vain.

THE education I have hitherto given you convinces me, that the toilette will not engage your chief attention; you ought to ſpend as much time at it, as is neceſſary for your decent appearance in company

company. We muſt not fly in the face of faſhion, or make ourſelves remarkable by our ſingularity: but there are certain trifles in dreſs, which we ought to deſpiſe. Thoſe, which make a woman a ſlave to her dreſs, are fit only for ſuch weak minds, as the preſent age, with all its attachment to trifles, hath not yet learnt to eſteem.

Let your hours be properly regulated; and you will find time to worſhip God, and to purſue ſome uſeful ſtudy. You will then have no imaginary complaints; and will be an utter ſtranger to the miſeries attendant upon idleneſs: a life well employed is always an agreeable life.

Do not think of amuſing yourſelf with reading romances; it is a real malady to have one's brain filled with ſuch ideas as they furniſh. We never ſee things in

their true light; they give us a taſte only for ridiculous extravagancies, extraordinary adventures and marvellous ſentiments: we inſenſibly adopt the language of ſelf-importance and affectation, and become ourſelves the heroines of romance.

THE books you read ſhould be as pure as your heart, and be reduced within a narrow compaſs. It is a miſtake, to pretend that our ſex ought to *ſtudy*. We have no offices of truſt to fill, nor any dignities to be inveſted with; and therefore we have only need to learn what is neceſſary to form the mind, and improve the underſtanding. Almoſt every learned woman ſhews that the ſciences do not belong to us: I have ſeldom ſeen one of them, that was not vain, deciſive, and affected in her manner of thinking, ſpeaking, and acting.

YOUR

YOUR attention ſhould be directed to works of ingenuity; and you ſhould learn the beſt methods of regulating a family, whenever you ſhall be ſettled in the world. You may perhaps be told, that this is not a faſhionable mode of education; but faſhion muſt not be allowed to ſuperſede duty. A woman, whoſe life is a perpetual round of trifles, is only fit to be made the ſubject of a comedy.

PRIDE perſuades perſons of a certain rank, that they live only to enjoy themſelves. How ſhould I be grieved, if you entertained ſuch ſentiments as theſe! Pleaſure ought only to be conſidered as a relaxation from fatigue; and muſt always be regulated and approved by virtue. Obſerve this rule, and you will ſee what ſentiments we ought to entertain of the generality of public diverſions.

ſions. I have ſo good an opinion of your underſtanding, as to think you would one day deſpiſe me; if I recommended them to you, as the means of giving you any ſolid ſatisfaction. If *one* innocent mind has been corrupted by them, that alone is ſufficient to prove them dangerous; beſides this, libertines ſpeak highly enough of them, to make us ſuſpect that they are rather of a miſchievous than uſeful tendency.

As to cards, played merely for amuſement, and under the reſtrictions formerly mentioned, I ſee not why you ſhould totally reject them. They ruin no one, they prevent idle converſation, they promote a ſocial intercourſe; and provided you uſe them with moderation, this is as allowable as any other relaxation. The ſame may be ſaid of muſic; it is with great propriety conſidered

dered as an accompliſhment in a lady: and is often found of great uſe in thoſe hours, wherein we wiſh for amuſement.

REMEMBER, my dear child, that an obliging behaviour is the very life of ſociety. There is no one who is not pleaſed with a ſmiling countenance; a want of good humour would render you inſupportable to yourſelf and every one about you. A reaſonable ſoul ought always to be under the guidance of reaſon; the behaviour of a capricious miſtreſs is a great diſcouragement to her attendants: if you would ſecure their affection, endeavour to deſerve it.

MY weakneſs, which daily increaſes, will not allow me to hope that I ſhall live to ſee you ſettled in the world: but it is GOD's will that it ſhould be ſo; and to his Providence I ſubmit. Yet let me previouſly obſerve to you, that an amiable

amiable and obliging wife may almoſt always inſure to herſelf a kind and indulgent huſband. Let your affection be confined to him, whom you have engaged to love: ſeek only to pleaſe him, and peace ſhall dwell in your houſe. But if, in ſpite of all your care and prudence, things ſhould not always go ſmoothly on; you will find a conſcience void of reproach, the greateſt comfort in the world.

KEEP yourſelf an utter ſtranger to intrigues; when we are faithful in the diſcharge of our duty, we have no need to have recourſe to artifice and falſehood. The conduct of a virtuous woman never ſhuns the light: the more her character is enquired into, the better ſhe is ſatisfied. It is a pitiable ſituation to live in a ſtate of perpetual apprehenſion; and to have no better ſecurity againſt public

ſhame,

ſhame, than the prudence or fidelity of a domeſtic, whom one has made a confidant. Nothing is ſo dearly purchaſed, as the confidence of low and venal minds: be connected only with women of the ſtricteſt virtue; it is our acquaintance, which fixes our reputation.

If you ſhould have children, do not part with them at that time, when the light of reaſon begins to dawn in their minds. Then it is, that the ſoul is capable of impreſſions, which can never afterwards be effaced; then it is, that it muſt be filled with whatſoever can inſpire it with the love of truth. How very imperfectly do they diſcharge the duty of a mother; who only ſee their children, either to admire, or to chide them! Reflect on the conduct of the fowls of the air; always engaged in the care of their young, they never leave them

them 'till they have taught them to fly. Are we leſs wiſe than theſe irrational creatures? One would think, by the difference in our conduct, that reaſon was inferior to inſtinct.

When you appear thoroughly impreſſed with a love of your duty, you will have fewer admirers of your perſon, than of your virtue. There is nothing more diſguſting than the character of a woman, who liſtens only to fulſome compliments; who only lies in wait for flattery, and whoſe behaviour on obtaining it is truly ridiculous. A well diſpoſed mind treats every one with proper reſpect; and never loſes its dignity, even when it is moſt familiar.

Be always upon your guard againſt a profeſſed wit: he is a critic, who often does us great miſchief: if he is not ſatirical, he is at leaſt very forward, and his

his repartees are to be dreaded. Modeſty is no objection to any perſon: and few have ever yet complained of it. To give your own opinion with diffidence, to hear that of others with attention, and candidly to defend your neighbour's reputation where it may be defended, is a ſure way to be loved and eſteemed.

ABHOR luxury and idleneſs; theſe two, which are the ſources of many other vices, weaken and deſtroy the powers of the mind. Study nothing more than a delicacy of ſentiment and behaviour; ſpeak without affectation, and write without diſguiſe: nothing is ſo pleaſing as the truth. The letters of Madame *de Sévigné*, which you cannot read too often, have never been without admirers, from their being ſo exactly conformable to nature; it is a ſure ſign of our want of wit, when we are always endeavouring to ſhew it.

SUCH

SUCH is the advice, my dear daughter, which my own experience and my heart ſuggeſt; a knowledge of the world will ſupply the reſt: this is a ſcience, which never is forgotten, and which prevents our being deficient in any neceſſary point of behaviour.

YOU are doubtleſs ſurprized that, in a ſeries of inſtruction, which comprehends the whole of life, I ſhould have ſaid nothing on the ſubject of Religion. But you will ceaſe to wonder, when I tell you, that I reſerve a ſubject, ſo intereſting to your brothers and yourſelf, for another conference; when I have an opportunity of ſpeaking to you all together.

YOUR father, whom you ſcarce remember, charged me to be particularly attentive to *your* education. Tho' he is no more, he ought to live continually

in your heart, by a conſtant love of virtue; this is the beſt way of recalling him to your mind, and of ſhewing your reſpect for his memory.

THE hour is at hand, when you will be an orphan; but you will be in the hands of GOD; He is more eſpecially the protector of the fatherleſs. In other reſpects, you may depend on the goodneſs of your uncle, whoſe ſentiments I well know; he loves you, and he is a man of the ſtricteſt integrity. He will conſider you as his daughter; and will ſettle you in the world, ſo as to make you happy. With all my heart I wiſh you to be ſo; for it is impoſſible to love you more tenderly than I do. But enough for the preſent, my dear child; it is time for you to retire; and I am too much agitated by talking thus tenderly with you. Your preſence excites

thoſe tears, which my grief will not ſuffer to break forth:—I feel myſelf almoſt ſuffocated;—I would wiſh to recover my ſpirits, but I am not able:—O! amiable child of a mother, deeply afflicted!

CON-

CONFERENCE XI.

ON STUDY.

THOUGH the preſence of your ſiſter cauſed in me ſuch emotions of tenderneſs, as almoſt entirely overcame me; yet I am not willing any longer to defer my admonitions on the love which you ought to have for *Study*. I perceive that I am haſtening to my end; and I deſire nothing more ſincerely than that, being reduced to eternal ſilence, I may find a place in your remembrance. This is the portion of a being, who has only a borrowed and moſt precarious life.

I SHALL not enter into a detail, which ſuppoſes a knowledge of the ſciences, and of the learned profeſſors of them. For beſides that it was always my opinion that a woman ought not to ſtudy mathematics, or philoſophy; that round of diſſipation in which I have ſpent ſo great a part of my life, has left me little more than common experience, and ſome remembrance of what I have heard others mention on this head.

I SHOULD imagine that you can never do better, than devote to literary purſuits the moments which are at your own diſpoſal: a mind, which we neglect to cultivate, is like a body which we do not feed. By reading, the faculties are enlarged, the memory is ſtrengthened, and the imagination is enriched: but the principal point is, to diſtinguiſh what is worth reading, in the midſt of ſo many works,

works, as are continually making their appearance in the world; this choice is a matter of real difficulty.

Mr. ————, to whoſe merit you are no ſtrangers, and whom I have conſulted upon this ſubject, is of opinion, that you ſhould immediately have recourſe to ſuch writings, as tend to regulate the morals, and to form the mind. He adviſes your beginning with books of ſuch a nature as will furniſh you with ſound principles on the moſt important obligations of life; ſuch as will ſhew you the deluſions of ſenſual conduct, and the deſtruction occaſioned by the indulgence of our paſſions; ſuch as will elevate your minds, by making you acquainted with God and with yourſelves.

When you have firſt taken care to furniſh yourſelves with virtuous ſentiments, you will diligently conſult ſuch

authors, as have written on the ſubject of your profeſſion: it being an unpardonable ignorance not to be well acquainted with whatever is the buſineſs of our lives. Your uncle, who has been engaged in military ſervice all his life, and who has ſtudied all the arts and exerciſes of war, will be the beſt director in this reſpect; and will furniſh you with the propereſt books on the ſubject: apply yourſelves diligently to this ſtudy, and you will ſoon reap the fruits of it. A ſoldier, who goes on only in the beaten track, without making himſelf thoroughly acquainted with the nature of his buſineſs, is little better than a piece of clock-work; which muſt be ſet in motion, and never deviates from the path aſſigned it.

AFTER this, you will learn to know the world: BRUYERE'S characters, and ROCHE-

ROCHEFOUCAULT'S maxims, will be found uſeful to you; in theſe writers you will ſee the portraits of all ſorts of men, both in their public and private capacity.

HISTORY is another picture, which you ſhould carefully examine: all the operations of the heart and mind are there deſcribed in the moſt intereſting manner. BOSSUET'S treatiſe on this ſubject is conſidered as a maſter-piece.

BOOKS of mere amuſement, which do not take their place 'till after thoſe of inſtruction, are however neceſſary, by way of relaxation, to prevent fatigue. I know no romance worth reading except Don Quixote and Telemachus; almoſt all the reſt are either trifling, or miſchievous: fiction is ſeldom made uſe of with ſafety; it either ſerves to embelliſh vice, or to ridicule virtue.

IT is very right, that you ſhould read the beſt poets: poetry elevates the mind, warms the imagination, and makes us perfect in the art of expreſſion; but care muſt be taken to ſtudy the poets with diſcretion. Proſe, being leſs likely to ſeduce the mind, is more proper for young perſons who ſuffer themſelves too eaſily to be impoſed upon: we can never be too much on our guard againſt the glaring appearance of what is falſely accounted beautiful. I have known many people, whoſe taſte has been ſpoiled by reading nothing but poetry: the rhyme ſeduces, the harmony of numbers bewitches; and what is oftentimes only fiction paſſes for truth.

NEVER purchaſe books, without conſulting learned and judicious friends; and remember that it is not the number, but the choice of books which really adorns

adorns and improves the mind. The library of a military man is large enough, if it contains two or three hundred volumes; they who have more, either keep them for the uſe of others, or to flatter their own vanity. How many noblemen are there, who make no more uſe of their library, than of their greenhouſe; ſeldom, if ever, entering into either!

I HAVE heard it affirmed by a celebrated writer, that almoſt all modern works are only copies; and that we ought only to ſtudy ſuch, as are originals. I am ſorry this author is now no more; becauſe he would have given you the beſt information on this head; but you will eaſily meet with other learned perſons, who will readily direct your ſtudies. If you purſue the plan here propoſed, you will divide into four

claſſess

claſſes all the books which you have any need of: the firſt will include books, on the ſubject of religion; the ſecond, books of inſtruction in your profeſſion; the third, thoſe which are proper to introduce you to natural and moral philoſophy: and the fourth, books of mere amuſement. We ſeldom read to advantage, but when we read methodically.

THERE are other works, which we may run through; ſuch as, the daily, and periodical publications; which may ſerve to give you a ſuperficial knowledge of what is paſſing in the literary world; and will prevent your being a ſtranger to what is talked of in company on theſe ſubjects. But always ſhew wiſdom and diſcretion enough, not to confound this kind of writing with thoſe numerous publications, which good ſenſe and religion equally diſclaim. IM-

IMPROPER reading is the ruin of young minds; forbidden books ought to be conſidered in the light of evil company. Neither the ſtyle of a work, nor the name of an author, can excuſe your reading either what is ſatirical or impure: vice is always vice, under whatever colours it preſents itſelf. There are theatrical performances, ſo decent that we may venture to go thro' them, and ſo intereſting, that we cannot help wiſhing to do it: be prudent without affectation; and you will never have any vain ſcruples.

THE books, which you have hitherto read, are little more than the elements, and as it were the alphabets of ſcience; thoſe which you ſhould hereafter read, ought to contain the knowledge of things, and ſound reaſoning upon them. There are different kinds of ſtudy appropriated

to

to all ages and ſtations. The mind of an eccleſiaſtic demands a very different ſort of cultivation from that of a man of the world.

THE generality of mankind are ſatisfied with being able to write and to ſpeak well; but this is not ſufficient for perſons in your ſituation. Your country requires that as ſoldiers you ſhould be well inſtructed, ſo as to be able to give a ſatisfactory reaſon for whatever you do: you will moreover find in ſtudy the happy ſecret of not being burthenſome to any one; and will have a perpetual ſource of entertainment in yourſelves.

WELL choſen books are our beſt friends; we find them always ready when we want them: and, when judiciouſly choſen, they always ſpeak the truth to us. It is a great happineſs to be

be able ſometimes to endure ſolitude: we muſt learn how to withdraw ourſelves from the converſe of men, as well as how to bear with it. We muſt lay in a ſtore of knowledge againſt approaching old age: by reading, we enlarge the ſphere of our underſtanding; and we afterwards feel much greater pleaſure in the midſt of ſociety. All theſe advantages will attend you, if you love ſtudy, and cultivate your intellectual faculties.

YOUR father—alas! I would to GOD, he were now ſupplying my place on this important ſubject! your father has often told me, that in great towns a love of ſtudy preſerved him from a thouſand dangers, and that in little villages it ſerved him inſtead of company. Be poſſeſſed of this reſource; for knowlege is a treaſure which no thief can ſteal: yet do not ſeek this treaſure at the expence

pence of your health. Immoderate application to ſtudy exhauſts the ſpirits, and fatigues the mind.

TAKE heed alſo, that learning does not make you poſitive or pedantic; the more men really know, the leſs they affect to ſhew it. We make every man our enemy, whom we humiliate by an affected ſuperiority: but he, who regards his own intereſt, ſeeks to make himſelf friends. If it be true that ignorance is deſpiſed, it is not leſs true that preſumptuous knowledge is generally hated: an oſtentatious diſplay of learning never ſucceeds.

YOU muſt not expect to find ſtudy always agreeable: like the roſe, it has its beauties, but is not without its thorns. The beginning of every ſcience, as M. de Fontenelle obſerves, is difficult; and nothing but aſſiduity and labour will enable

enable you to taſte the pleaſures of it. I ſhould recommend it to you to devote three hours at leaſt, in every day, to ſtudy: two in the morning, and one in the evening. You are never to forget that you owe ſomething to your rank in life, as well as to ſociety; and that it is with the ſoul, as it is with the body: exceſſive hunger and repletion are both injurious to it; by the one it is famiſhed, by the other it is overloaded.

THERE is another inconvenience, in an indiſcreet love of ſtudy; that it makes us too cold, and philoſophical; it makes men behave in company with an air of too much gravity, and abſence; and gives them the appearance of old men at the age of thirty. Accuſtom yourſelves to leave your books, as we leave the company of our friends; ſeem to forget them, 'till you take them up again.

again. The world, perhaps, is very little intereſted in what you read; ſo that probably what nearly affected *you*, might to *them* be perfectly indifferent: every one has his own particular manner of conſidering things. Our converſation with the dead demands recollection, and application; but that which we hold with the living ſhould be full of eaſe, and ſprightlineſs.

If you are really fond of ſtudy, you will every where find an opportunity of gratifying your taſte: the very graſs on which you tread, and the inſect which you deſpiſe, will ſerve to diſplay the wonders of divine wiſdom. Accuſtom yourſelf always to travel with a common place book; a landſcape, a monument, a ruin, every thing of this ſort, finds a place in the journal of a perſon of reflection.

The

THE knowlege of cuſtoms and manners is another ſcience, which deſerves your attention. You will doubtleſs have opportunities, in the courſe of your profeſſion, of ſeeing the different nations which ſurround us: war lays open every country to the obſervation of the ſoldier. You will then be able yourſelves to mark the difference betwixt a Spaniard and a Frenchman, an Italian and an Engliſhman. But remember at the ſame time, that in this variety there is ſomething not unlike the parterres of a garden; in which each flower has its merit and perfection: it is a great error, to expect that all the world ſhould be juſt ſuch as ourſelves.

I HAVE nothing more to ſay on this ſubject: my knowlege of it is very confined, and my ſtrength too much exhauſted to be able to prolong this con-

ference. You live in an age in which you will not want for directors, if you know how to chuſe them: as for me, my chief ſtudy at preſent is, the contemplation of death. I perceive nothing but ſhades of darkneſs, which ſurround me on every ſide. My tender regard for you indeed ſerves from time to time to diſperſe them; and opens to my view a gleam of light, by the help of which I behold you, as the delight of my ſoul, and the very joy of my heart. Nothing moves me, where you are not concerned; but I am immediately rouſed, when your welfare is in queſtion, and I at once forget all my pains and all my infirmities.

If my attachment is too ſtrong, God, I hope, will pardon it: for he ſees the very bottom of my heart, that it has at preſent only one deſire, viz. that you may

may be truly virtuous. I will not ſay, I would ſacrifice my life, to obtain this bleſſing; for alas! what would that be worth, at the hands of one, who has only a few wretched hours, or perhaps minutes to live? But this is moſt certain, that I never yet deſired any thing more earneſtly, than I now wiſh for your happineſs both in this world and the next.

I HUMBLY hope, that GOD will open the kingdom of Heaven to receive me; and I truſt, I ſhall hereafter ſee you with me there. The ſhort enjoyment, I have had of you upon earth, is not ſufficient to ſatisfy my affection for you; I perceive, it is yet too much alive to die with me.

ALAS! how much do we ſuffer, when the heart is ſo full of ſenſibility as mine is! But I muſt even diveſt myſelf of

nature, if I would get rid of my ſentiments of love and tenderneſs for my children.

CON-

CONFERENCE XII.

ON THE CLERICAL CHARACTER.

THE diſorder of this excellent lady increaſing, they deſpaired of her being any more able to diſcourſe with her family: but it pleaſed GOD, that the ſymptoms abated, and her ſtrength returned for a little while. Ever filled with the tendereſt concern for her children, ſhe embraced this opportunity of calling her ſon the *Abbé*, and thus addreſſed him—

YOU, my ſon, have made choice of a ſtate of life very different from that of your brothers; the advice, therefore,

which I would wiſh to give you, ought to be perſonally directed to yourſelf. My great comfort, with reſpect to the profeſſion you have engaged in, is, that I have not over-ruled your choice; this encourages me to hope, that GOD will bleſs you in it. You have more need, than any other, of the gifts of heaven; becauſe you have more duties to diſcharge: no inſtance of miſconduct in an eccleſiaſtic is trifling or inconſiderable.

I AM but little acquainted with divinity, or with the books which you ought to ſtudy: but I know that your life ought to be a life of application; and that if idleneſs is a fault in us, in one of your profeſſion it is a crime.

I KNOW alſo, that the books, which ſhould engage your principal attention, are not merely books of amuſement; but thoſe which treat of chriſtian perfection, and

and the means which lead us to it. For how will you be able to direct others, if you have not yourſelf learnt the way?

BE careful not to be occupied too much with ſecular affairs: thoſe eccleſiaſtics, who have been ſo engaged, have never yet found it the way to procure eſteem. They are indeed ſought after, and conſulted; but they are not really reſpected: we think, with reaſon, that their function ſhould be ſacred.

EXTERNALLY to renounce the world, and afterwards eagerly to purſue the concerns of it, is to aſſume a character truly ridiculous: the life of an eccleſiaſtic, immerſed in worldly concerns, is inconſiſtency itſelf.

I SAY nothing to you of your morals. The moſt unſullied virtue is ſo eſſential to your profeſſion, that he who is deſtitute of it is an object of deteſtation in

ſight of GOD and man: in ſpite of the corruption of the age, a vicious prieſt is inſupportable. Even the libertine is ſhocked, when he hears of the miſconduct of a perſon, inveſted with your ſacred character: all men expect, that they, who are required to ſet an example to others, ſhould themſelves be really exemplary.

WHAT can be more offenſive, than the ſight of a clerical *petit-maître*, whoſe whole life is ſpent in ridiculous trifles? There is a certain decorum, which you cannot too ſcrupulouſly obſerve. I never ſaw an eccleſiaſtic, who affected to be a man of the world, that did not make himſelf contemptible: the company generally amuſe themſelves with ſuch an one, as a bauble or a toy.

IF you would wiſh to be reſpected, your outward appearance muſt not contradict

tradict the nature of your profeſſion. Let all your purpoſes be honourable and prudent, and all your words be the interpreters of your mind: it is a certain indication of a depravity of heart, when we are not circumſpect in our converſation.

SHUN hypocriſy, and affected ſingularity; your ſituation is too conſiderable to have a part to act. Appear to be ſuch as you really are, and every one will reſpect you; affected manners ſuppoſe weakneſs or duplicity.

As for public diverſions, conſider them as prohibited to perſons of your profeſſion: an eccleſiaſtic is to be pitied, who cannot find ſufficient employment and ſatisfaction in the duties of his function. I do not mean to exclude innocent domeſtic amuſements among your friends, but an immoderate attendance

on

on places of public reſort. And above all things, what is called *play* in public, I look upon as criminal in a clergyman: one half of the company ridicules, while the other is offended at ſuch behaviour; and all agree, that it tends to the injury and diſcredit of religion.

In your apparel, be neither careleſs nor finical: a graceful ſimplicity ſhould diſtinguiſh a perſon, whoſe duty it is to recommend moderation to others. He, who endeavours to ſet himſelf off by an undue conformity to the world in his dreſs or manners, appears to be aſhamed of his profeſſion: he is a kind of amphibious creature, who being neither fit for the church, nor for the world, has ſomething monſtrous in his appearance. We are not fond of inconſiſtencies, either in men's outward behaviour, or in their minds: he, who is not conſiſtent

ent in his conduct, is like an actor on the ſtage.

THE faſhions of the world are not deſigned to be adopted by prieſts or magiſtrates; the gravity of their character muſt be ſhewn in their manners, and in their dreſs. Impertinence is deſpicable in any one; in perſons conſecrated to the prieſthood it is odious. What muſt one think of a clergyman running from morning till night, from one ſcene of pleaſure to another? The world laughs at him, religion weeps.

I NEED not ſay, that you cannot be too circumſpect in every thing which concerns the ordinances of religion; one doctrine of which, you well know, cannot be attacked, without materially injuring the whole. A prieſt, who ſhould himſelf be wretch enough to treat them with contempt, muſt be conſidered as one

one that holds himſelf up to ridicule and juſt reproach.

CONSIDER it as your duty, to frequent the ſociety of the moſt learned and virtuous men: their converſation reflects light upon us; and we inſenſibly copy after their manners. Be cautious in your behaviour to the female ſex, avoiding all offenſive levity: it fares with the reputation of an eccleſiaſtic, as with a mirrour; the ſmalleſt blemiſh deſtroys its beauty.

LET your library conſiſt of the moſt celebrated books, and delight in reading them: an ignorant clergyman is a man, who makes ſport for the public; one who diſhonours religion, and whom all men deſpiſe.

RATHER be afraid, than ambitious, of heaping up benefices and dignities; at leaſt never try to obtain them by adulation

tion or intrigue. He, who purchaſes by mean compliances the higheſt preferments in the church, loſes oftentimes his honour, if not his ſoul. Merit alone ought to recommend an eccleſiaſtic, who knows what his profeſſion demands of him, and is diſpoſed to conform himſelf to the duties of it.

Be always ready to open your heart and your purſe to the truly wretched: and eſpecially, if you are largely provided for, conſider your riches as intended principally for their benefit. There is nothing ſo oppoſite to the tenor of the goſpel, as a covetous or ambitious prieſt. Your own patrimony will be ſufficient for you, if you are not addicted to luxury and exceſs; it is this, which almoſt always reduces men to poverty.

AIM at ſimplicity in your furniture and in every thing that is external: let your virtues be your principal ornament, and be indifferent about the reſt.

LET not pride ever take poſſeſſion of your heart; it is the characteriſtic of a weak mind, and the ſureſt way to become hateful to others. There is no one, who is not charmed with condeſcenſion and ſweetneſs of behaviour: but if this were not the caſe, how is it poſſible to reconcile a haughty diſpoſition with the precepts of the goſpel?

SUCH, my dear ſon, are the inſtructions, which I thought it my duty to give *you*; every word is dictated by affection, and an earneſt deſire of promoting your happineſs. The ſeminary, in which you have been educated, muſt needs have inſpired you with a love of ſtudy, and a veneration for religion.

Never

Never forget the principles there imbibed; and often reflect, that a perſon of your character ought only to appear in the world, for the ſake of improving it. His faults are by no means confined to himſelf; they furniſh all who ſee them with a pretence, for ſtrengthening themſelves in their wickedneſs, and perſiſting in it.

You muſt remember, that the conduct of your brothers ought not to be a matter of indifference to you: your profeſſion engages you to point out to them their duty, and to remonſtrate, if you find them negligent of it. But, to give weight to your admonitions, you muſt ſet them a good example; and you muſt adminiſter reproof with tenderneſs and diſcretion: reprehenſion is always ill received, if the ſeverity of it is not wiſely tempered with expreſſions of affection and humility.

YOUR father, who was always intent on the welfare of his children, would have taken every method of enabling you to do the higheſt honour to that profeſſion, which you have choſen. May GOD, who has taken him from us, be himſelf your conductor and guide! Cleave ſteadfaſtly to HIM, in the faithful ſervice of whom conſiſt all our glory and our happineſs.

CON-

CONFERENCE XIII.

ON PRIDE.

PRIDE, my dear children, being frequently connected with an exalted ſituation in life; I think it my duty to ſet before you the folly and danger of it. Be aſſured it is this, which hath carried every ſpecies of luxury to its preſent height; and hath made that the idol of almoſt every rank. We impoveriſh ourſelves, merely for the ſake of outward ſhew; and every poſſible ſhift is made to *cut a figure* in the world.

We are anxious to conceal our common original; and that common deſ-

tiny, which puts us all upon a level. We endeavor, if poſſible, to perſuade ourſelves, that a rich man is quite a different creature from the reſt of mankind; and that there is no ſuch thing as real greatneſs in the world, inſeparable from riches and honours.

The effect of ſuch a perſuaſion is, that virtue has no charms to engage our affections; it is a ſhade which we avoid, that we may baſk in the ſunſhine of Fortune, whom with idolatrous veneration we adore.

We have ſeen the luxury and pride, which abound at this time in our cities, begin and increaſe in ſuch a manner, as to ruin the moſt opulent families: we have ſeen that ſimplicity exploded, which diſtinguiſhed our anceſtors, and rendered their manners ſo amiable and reſpectable. Their deſcendants very ſoon began

gan to be aſhamed of *their* plain attire, their humble accommodations, their venerable portraits; nothing was any where to be ſeen but a profuſion of expence, in building magnificent houſes, in purchaſing the richeſt dreſſes, and having the moſt coſtly furniture.

WHAT extravagance do you not ſee, in this reſpect! I am ſure it often aſtoniſhes you; and you are thoroughly ſenſible of the folly of it: and cannot but perceive, how greatly our morals ſuffer by it, and how bitterly virtue laments the effects of it.

WHEN we grow familiar with vanity, and make it the object of our love and purſuit; the ſoul is regarded as a thing of nought, and the body is in a manner idolized: we torment and even ruin ourſelves, only for the ſake of this; and think of nothing but dazzling our eyes with or-

naments, gratifying our ears with concerts, and our taſte with all kinds of meat, however luxurious and expenſive.

It is pride, which produces effeminacy; and which prevents our ever moving but in equipages, ever ſleeping but on beds of down: it is continually inventing new pleaſures; it enervates the mind; and renders even the ſtouteſt men, little ſuperior to women both in their dreſs, and in their general turn of life.

O! my children, place this picture often before your eyes; and let it prevent your giving yourſelves up to pernicious luxury: my former propenſity to this fooliſh vanity is the cauſe, why I am not better able to ſpeak to you on the ſubject; but it has alſo enabled me thoroughly to diſcover its emptineſs and folly. My own reflections convince me, that

that we forget we are rational, or even human, creatures; and fancy that our wealth is only given us, to procure whatever tends to the gratification of our paſſions. Luxury is an abyſs, which ſwallows up the greateſt eſtates, and which we are ſeldom able to fathom: the faſhions which it ſtudies, and the trifles which engage its attention, are ſo many occaſions of our ruin.

Be truly great, and you will never be vain: you will know, that there is a certain propriety to be found between the two extremes of avarice and prodigality; and it is this, which ought to regulate your table, your dreſs, and your equipage. You will know that pride, in making us vain, renders us ridiculous; and that when this prevails, we ſee young men effeminately devoting themſelves to the toilette, and paſſing

half their time under the hands of the hair dreſſer. You will find them as ſeriouſly engaged in determining the colour of their cloaths, the ſize and ſhape of a ſhoe buckle, and other ſuch trifles, as if they were matters of the moſt ſerious importance.

If you give yourſelves up to pride, you will be ſlaves to theſe idle vanities; and you will thereby weaken the force of that manly virtue, which you naturally inherit from your worthy father.

Besides this, you will have every kind of whim and caprice to gratify; you will find numbers ready to ſupply your demands, by advancing you ſums of money. You will be told, that to be in debt is no reflection upon the character of a man of quality; and you will be encouraged to multiply debts, and to ruin your fortune. Every day furniſhes

us

us with examples, which confirm this truth. How many perſons of immenſe eſtates outlive their income; and find themſelves ſurrounded by domeſtics, whom they cannot pay; by creditors, who are frequently worrying them: filled with remorſe, which perpetually torments them; and reduced at length to a ſtate of extreme indigence and neceſſity!

SUCH are the effects of pride; it carries us headlong into every kind of extravagance: and preſents to our view a houſe, the furniture of which is not yet paid for, the domeſtics full of diſcontent, and the maſter of the family himſelf at his wit's end, being no longer able to find creditors to truſt him.

THESE, my dear children, theſe are the miſeries which you muſt expect to ſuffer, if you give way to the ſuggeſtions of

of pride. But even ſuppoſing it did not carry you to this extremity of diſtreſs, I need not ſay more to diſſuade you from it, than that it will tend to rob you of your virtue; make you regardleſs of the miſeries of your neighbour, and fond of all thoſe effeminate indulgences, and that ridiculous parade, which the world encourages, and ſo paſſionately admires.

I SHOULD not do juſtice to your father, if I did not obſerve to you, that he was generous and even magnificent according to his circumſtances; yet a noble ſimplicity, and a prudent œconomy peculiarly diſtinguiſhed his character. His uncorrupted manners rejected all thoſe expenſive trifles, which an unreaſonable fondneſs for luxury has rendered faſhionable: the love of his country ſo engroſſed his affections, as to leave no room for vanity in his heart.

EVERY

EVERY wiſe and virtuous perſon conſiders luxury as the ſource of all kinds of iniquity: he knows, it is in the ſchool of pride that we learn to deſpiſe the poor, to harden our hearts, and to ſeek after every refinement of pleaſure. We cannot bear the ſight of an object that is diſagreeable to behold; we cannot breathe but among perfumes; we cannot exiſt, but in the midſt of ſoftneſs and pleaſure.

IT is a great misfortune not to be able to diſtinguiſh betwixt the ſuperfluities and the neceſſaries of life; our paſſions are ſo many tyrants, who allow us no reſt, 'till we have found the means of ſatisfying their demands. Hence we ſee, that thoſe among the great, who liſten to the dictates of pride, are really in a ſtate of ſlavery: they are abſolutely dependent on faſhion, in the moſt trifling cir-

circumſtance of their lives. If any article is defective in the midſt of all their ſplendour, they are diſtracted, they loſe all patience; they appear to be ſo entirely taken up with external ornaments, with finery and parade, that they ſeem to live for no other purpoſe than to gratify a reſtleſs appetite for trifles.

When we viſit perſons of this turn of mind, we do them *the honour* to be utterly regardleſs of themſelves, that we may give our whole attention to their furniture. We ſpeak to them only of what is every where around them; we attend only to that which dazzles our eyes: as if we meant to give them to underſtand, that if they had nothing to exhibit, more worthy of our notice than themſelves, they might be contented to live in perpetual ſolitude.

Surely,

SURELY, my dear children, there is nothing very captivating in ſuch empty characters as theſe; yet ſuch is the glory of thoſe who live in ſubjection to luxury and pride, that they are not regarded on their own account, but merely for the ſake of their table, and their ſhow. As a proof of which, if they loſe their riches, they inſtantly ſink into contempt; it is hardly remembered that ſuch perſons ever exiſted. How different is the ſtate of thoſe, who are really virtuous! whatever misfortunes befall them, they ſeldom wánt a panegyriſt or admirer, but are generally regarded and eſteemed. Hiſtory furniſhes us with a thouſand inſtances of perſons, whoſe merit, without any other ſupport, has been reſpected even in the loweſt obſcurity: ſuch is the power and influence of truth!

WHICH of you then, my dear children, would not rather embrace a virtuous poverty, than be ſatiated with luxuries, and be deſtitute of virtue? I am perſuaded, that neither of you would heſitate a moment, in the determination of your choice.

IF my health would ſuffer me to enter more particularly on the ſubject, I could ſhew you other evil effects of pride; and particularly, that it attracts to itſelf perſons of the moſt trifling and inſignificant character. Look at the houſe of ſuch a one as I have been deſcribing; and you will find it filled with thoſe pretty gentlemen, whoſe whole life is ſpent in ruining their fortune and their conſtitution. You will find it to be the rendezvous of gameſters; (for gaming is an inſeparable appendage to perſons of that turn of mind, which I have been deſcribing:)

in

in ſhort, luxury has there diſplayed her utmoſt charms, to ruin thoſe very people, who are ſtudious to ſupport her empire in the world.

An elegant ſimplicity will deliver you from the ſociety of men of ſuch licentious conduct, among whom virtue almoſt always ſuffers ſhip-wreck. Where pride prevails, religion is deſpiſed; an immortal ſpirit cannot accommodate herſelf to thoſe periſhable objects, which tend only to chain her down to the earth.

Do not imagine, that luxury is inſtantaneous in its growth; it has its beginning, and its progreſs: at firſt, it is no more than a deſire of having our houſes more elegantly furniſhed, or our perſons more faſhionably dreſt, than others of our rank. The love of faſhion inſenſibly gets the aſcendancy over us; 'till we think nothing agreeable, in which there

there is not an air of elegance and novelty. Scarce is this firſt ſtep taken, but ſimplicity becomes inſupportable: we deſpiſe a man, whom we ſee indifferently clothed; and we annex the idea of ſupreme felicity to idle and fantaſtic pleaſures.

We cannot but hold pride in the loweſt contempt, when we reflect, that every one of this diſpoſition enjoys the bleſſings of ſociety, without contributing any thing towards its advantage—he deprives the community of many uſeful members—does not properly diſcharge any duty whatever—and dies, without leaving any memorial, except of the riches which he has wantonly conſumed.

Luxury engages all the world in her ſervice: you would think there would be no artificers or manufacturers without her; and that the arts, the elements, and

and the ſeaſons, muſt become tributary to her. This it is, which overwhelms the luxurious man with pride; and makes him believe, that he is lord of the creation.

I EARNESTLY hope, theſe conſiderations will make a due impreſſion on your minds. Look on her without prejudice, and you will ſee that the pride which is ſo idolized is more tranſient, than the cloud which paſſeth away; you will ſee, that there is nothing good to be expected from a man enſlaved to vanity, and ſunk into effeminacy.

THAT ſwarm of *pétits maitres*, whom every man of ſenſe deſpiſes, owes its origin only to pride; which fills them with the love of themſelves: and thenceforth a new race of beings makes its appearance on the ſtage, expoſing their vanity to all around them; and burthening

thening ſociety with all the charges of their exiſtence.

But there is another dreadful effect of pride; which is, that it gives birth to thoſe idle and miſchievous books, which are continually publiſhing to the world: and which, however harmleſs they may be thought, tend to vitiate the taſte, and corrupt the morals. How many young people have been utterly ruined by improper books! If idleneſs and the love of pleaſure had not taken poſſeſſion of their hearts; they would never have quitted that happy ſimplicity of manners, which inſpires us with a love of truth, and teaches us to ſhun evil and purſue good.

There is yet another thing which I wiſh you to obſerve; namely, that you will inſenſibly loſe your ſtrength of mind, whenever you give yourſelves up to the influence

influence of pride: and what a ridiculous character is a ſoldier, diſſolved in luxury, and totally enervated? There remains nothing more of him than the ſhadow of a body; and an effeminate mind, to which the ſlighteſt hardſhip is a moſt inſupportable evil. Accuſtomed to ſleep under a richly-decorated pavilion, to feed on the moſt delicate food, to be attended by a number of ſervants, he is either diſqualified for the neceſſary duties of a ſoldier; or he carries to the camp a train of luxuries, which are ruinous to himſelf, and render him a bad example to others.

SURELY, my dear children, you would not wiſh to be ſoldiers, merely to live in eaſe and ſplendor: were this the caſe, you would be loaded with reproaches; and your pride, far from procuring you reſpect, would only bring you into con-

tempt. A *pétit maitre* is intirely out of his place, when he is called into the field of battle: his whims, his particularities, his delicacy, all ſerve to render him unhappy in himſelf, and ridiculous to others. He is pointed at as one, who rather acts a part, than is really ſuch as he ought to be.

YOUR good father has told me a thouſand times, that thoſe fine gentlemen, who are taken up in admiring themſelves, running continually from one circle to another, and abſolutely devoted to the buſineſs of the dreſſing-room, were always conſidered as officers of no conſequence or authority, whom the meaneſt ſoldier held in contempt. They can dance indeed, and they can ſing; but they cannot fight, both becauſe the art of war demands ſomething more than mere perſonal courage, and becauſe courage

courage itſelf is weakened by the love of pleaſure.

Look at the portraits of your anceſtors; take notice of their ſuits of armour. Think ye, that the delicacy of the preſent age would have had any charms for them; and that they would have admired an officer ſcented with perfumes? Alas! how ingenious are we, only to make ourſelves deſpiſed!

Leave pride to thoſe, who being ſuddenly grown rich, and ſtruck with ſeeing themſelves become men of conſequence, and encircled with flatterers, place all their merit in gilded furniture, and ſplendid equipages. Neither a virtuous man, nor a man of quality, has any need of luxury to ſet him off. It is a great reflection on the preſent age to ſuppoſe, that it only eſteems men according to outward ſhew: whereas he

alone is worthy of reſpect, whoſe character is diſtinguiſhed by a noble ſimplicity.

Besides, how many real inconveniences do we ſuffer from this expenſive turn of mind! Every part of our life ſavours of an uniform profuſion: we are ſubject to a thouſand forms and ceremonies: we are forced to paſs our whole time in acting a part; we are ſurrounded by falſe friends, inſolent ſervants, and almoſt always with anxiety, with debts and diſeaſes.

It is very ſeldom that a man, given up to pride and luxury, knows what ſobriety is. Phyſicians have obſerved, that all, who live to the full, are ſubject to indigeſtions and apoplexies; and that it is this abundance, which generally ſhortens their lives. We no longer regard our conduct, than while we live in a ſtate

ſtate of ſobriety: as for pleaſures, they are the chief executioners of the human race.

I THANK heaven, that my health has enabled me to talk with you to-day with leſs difficulty than uſual: you muſt have obſerved that my days are not all alike; and that oftentimes my ſpirits are depreſſed by the weakneſs of my body. I have now dwelt largely on my favourite ſubject of prudence, ſobriety and moderation: and if I have appeared tedious in my reflections, impute it to that tenderneſs, which makes me inſenſible of my ſufferings, and which gives me new life, whenever I am endeavouring to inſtruct you.

IN vain is death making daily advances on my emaciated body; in vain doth he every day rob me of a conſiderable part of my ſubſtance; I think myſelf in perfect health, while you are

with me: my concern is, to know how to endure the inſtant of our ſeparation. I perceive the advances which it makes; yet I find, at preſent, no reſources in my own ſtrength to fortify me againſt that affecting moment.

But perhaps—alas! I only deceive myſelf; I feel nothing but death approaching.

The phyſician coming in, the children withdrew; and gave way to thoſe effuſions of grief, which the preſence of their mother had ſuppreſſed.——

The lady, having been at church in the morning, returned about eleven o'clock; and having ſummoned her children, ſhe ſaid, "I am juſt come from viſiting my burial-place, and from looking with my dying eyes on the ſepulchre of your father. O! what pain has it given me to go through this ſolemn

lemn ceremony! But I was willing to humble that pride, which conceals from us what we are; and which would prove your ruin, ſhould you not be careful to guard againſt its illuſions. When we are brought up in the midſt of human grandeur, it is very difficult to perſuade ourſelves, that we are like other men, and that the brightneſs which ſurrounds us will ſoon be diſperſed like a vapour. In the mean time what have we, whereof we can juſtly glory? Alas! though you were nobly born, you came into the world weeping, helpleſs, and naked; and you muſt go out of it not leſs deſtitute of riches and honours. In vain will the world then offer you whatever is magnificent, and flattering to our vanity: all this will paſs away like a dream; and the grave will ſwallow up all your riches, and pride, and greatneſs.

In my viſit to your father's tomb, I ſaw nothing of all that glory which accompanied him on earth, and of all that homage which was paid him. Conſigned to a little ſpot of ground, where ſilence and horror prevail, he has only a marble monument; which already begins to be effaced, and which would ſcarcely be ſeen, if we were not purpoſely directed to it.

Is this, then, ſaid I to myſelf, all that remains of the buſy tumult of the world? Is it to this, that nobility of birth, and the moſt brilliant fortune leads us?

Yes, my children, this is the ſum of all our expectations, as to any thing earthly, whatever riches and dignities you enjoy. Death will place you on a level with the meaneſt of our fellow creatures; it will reduce you to duſt ſimilar

milar to their's, both in weight and value: keep then your eyes ever fixed on this period of human greatneſs.

It is this which will teach you, that you are nothing but frailty; and that the pride, which is almoſt inſeparable from an exalted ſtation, is the perfection of folly. Notwithſtanding all the privileges of your birth, all your titles, and all your advantages, you cannot command a moment's exiſtence: amidſt all your grandeur, you are in the power of the loweſt men, of the elements which govern you, of the diſeaſes which threaten you, and of a thouſand accidents, which you cannot foreſee. Your ſoul is as ſubject to ſorrow, and your body to pain, as that of the meaneſt ſlave; and the poor peaſant, whom perhaps you deſpiſe, enjoys the ſame ſun, the ſame climate with yourſelf, and has the ſame faculties

faculties of ſight, and taſte, and perception.

WHY then, my children, ſhould ſuch a difference be made betwixt perſons alike in ſo many reſpects? Is it, becauſe there is ſuch a diſparity in their birth? No: every one knows, that we all have one common Father, that our origin is from the earth; and that many a man owes his eminence of ſtation to inſtances of meanneſs, if not of downright wickedneſs.

Is it, becauſe they are conſigned to live by the labour of their hands? In this they only fulfil the obligation univerſally laid upon mankind. Is it, becauſe they are meanly clothed? Alas! what objects of pity are we, if we value ourſelves upon being covered only with the ſpoils of brutes and inſects.

WHAT

WHAT connection is there, betwixt that ſilk which is the produce of a worm, or that gold which we dig out of the bowels of the earth, and an immortal ſpirit? Surely we cannot make that ſplendor, which is only borrowed, the ſubject of pride and vanity. The pooreſt of our fellow creatures hath a body, a ſoul, and a ſpirit, as well as we; from whence we ought to conclude, that he is our brother: and that we are much inferior to him, in ſpite of all our grandeur and ambition, if he has more virtues, or nobler ſentiments, than ourſelves.

HENCE learn, that you ought never to deſpiſe any one; and that he, upon whom you look down with diſdain, may perhaps be endued with a more generous mind than all thoſe great men of the world, who, while they value themſelves on account of their ſuperiority, are really objects

objects of pity. How many are there; who, if they had an opportunity of ſhewing their abilities, would, by their genius and attainments, eclipſe thoſe men of fortune, that look down upon them with diſdain! And whom the patronage of one man of rank, or one fortunate circumſtance, might have raiſed to that degree of honour to which their abilities entitled them!

It is therefore neither obſcurity of birth, nor poverty, which lowers us in the eye of reaſon; but it is pride: becauſe there is nothing which is in reality ſo abject, as this vice and its effects. It is always an indication either of a mean ſpirit, or a corrupt heart. How can we deſpiſe others, without caſting at the ſame time a reflection on ourſelves? But were this not the caſe; what, I pray you, do you think we loſe of our riches

riches or our quality, by receiving with a gracious air all who approach us, and by addreſſing ourſelves with condeſcenſion to our inferiors?

ALAS! the man, who is fooliſhly puffed up with a ſenſe of his own importance, loſes every thing by his haughty air, and his imperious mode of behaviour: for he loſes the confidence and eſteem of mankind, which is the moſt valuable poſſeſſion in the world.

MEN of inferior rank are generally a match for thoſe among their ſuperiors, who treat them with contempt; for they are ſcarce out of their ſight, before they ridicule their whims and pride, and make them the ſubject of their pleaſantry and ſatire.

O! my children, if ever you ſhould deſpiſe the leaſt of your brethren, if ever you ſhould treat them with diſdain; you would

would diſhonour the memory of your father. He never thought himſelf great, but when it gave him an opportunity of obliging others; and in him the weak and indigent found kindneſs and relief. He removed their ſorrows; he anſwered them with gentleneſs: and if he found himſelf conſtrained to refuſe them what they aſked, he plainly ſhewed, how much concern it gave him.

Remember, that your elevated ſtation ſtands in need of the aſſiſtance of men of inferior rank to ſupport it; and that, if you had not people in ſubjection to your commands, you would lead a life of the moſt dreary ſolitude, and of extreme indigence. Some labour to ſupply you with food, others offer you their perſonal ſervice; and it is their preſence and aſſiduous attendance which forms your train, and renders you an object of public notice.

WE are therefore enemies to our own intereſt, when we deſpiſe thoſe, on whom we are ſo dependent for aſſiſtance. The generality of great men are reſpected only, in proportion to their retinue; ſo that they owe almoſt all their conſequence to the very perſons, whom they do not regard. How happy is it for us, when we know how to do juſtice to ourſelves; when we have judgment enough to eſtimate ourſelves according to our real worth!

NOTHING can be more dreadful than this arrogance of mind; which, carrying a man beyond the limits of an earthly being, renders him the ſcourge of every one about him. Might not you, my children, have been born the children of a peaſant, or mechanic? And if this was not your lot, can you aſſume any merit to yourſelves on this account?

As

As to mental endowments, however penetrating, or extenſive you may ſuppoſe them; they are too often no more than a glimmering light, which is ready to miſlead you: and which oftentimes ſhines only, at the expence of ſound wiſdom. Men of the greateſt genius frequently commit the greateſt faults: where wit is predominant, diſcretion is ſeldom found.

The more cloſely a man examines himſelf, the more ready he will be to acknowlege his weakneſs and infirmity. It is only with reſpect to our immortal part, that we are truly great: but in order to deſerve this character, we muſt be raiſed above our paſſions, and eſpecially above pride. It is a vice which we ought to know, except that we may avoid it: it marrs our beſt actions; and leaves to him, who is poſſeſſed of it, nothing but what is mean and ridiculous.

ONLY obſerve the man, who is wrapt up in himſelf, and is full of the admiration of his equipage and his gaudy cloaths; and you will perceive a degree of emptineſs in him, which you cannot but pity. The poor vain creature labours for no other purpoſe, than to make himſelf contemptible; while only a ſmile, or an obliging look, would conciliate the affections, and win the hearts of all, with whom he converſes. An air of affability, and a word of kindneſs, is ſufficient to gain a thouſand praiſes, and a thouſand thanks. From which you may conclude, that every man of quality, who incurs the hatred of others, thro' the neglect of that, which would coſt him ſo little, either a look, or a word, or an air, is in effect a dupe to his own pride, and really a very deſpicable being.

To whatever rank fortune may hereafter raiſe you, never forget, my children, to ſhew a pleaſing condeſcenſion in your whole deportment. Men generally vow vengeance againſt thoſe, who think themſelves raiſed above their fellow-creatures, only to aggravate the miſeries of the wretched; to overwhelm them with the weight of their pride; to make them the ſport of their capricious humour; to oblige them to a painful attendance in anti-chambers, where they are wearied out with impatience and diſguſt. Every ſpecies of greatneſs, which is thus aſſuming, is nothing better than abſolute tyranny.

To one who contemplates, as I do at preſent, the majeſty of GOD, how fooliſh as well as criminal doth the pride of man appear! How ſenſibly ſhould I be afflicted, if I foreſaw, that you would hereafter

hereafter behave yourſelves with inſolence, and become diſtinguiſhed by your haughty and imperious deportment! But I am perſuaded, this will not be the caſe: you will rather endeavour to imitate the courteſy and affability of your your father. And I truſt you will acquit your mother of arrogance; if ſhe ſhould venture to urge her own example, as not unworthy of your imitation in this reſpect.

HEAVEN, which knows my moſt ſecret thoughts, knows that I deſire neither riches nor honours for you: if ye are only good men, you will be always ſufficiently great.

O! my beloved children, if you could penetrate into my inmoſt thoughts, you could not doubt of my ſincerity; I conſider this union of hearts, as the only means of being always together. Death

may indeed deſtroy the body, but it has no power over our affection: this is my comfort, when the idea of our approaching ſeparation depreſſes my ſpirits. It is then, I have recourſe to my intelligent and immortal principle; in whoſe love and affection, as it were in a ſanctuary, you are to live for ever, and make part of my happineſs. It is then, I conſole myſelf with reflecting, that I ſhall not be abſolutely deprived of you; but that in ſpite of all the ravages of death, I ſhall retain you in my mind and my affections. The triumph of the cruel tyrant will only be partial: under this perſuaſion that our union is indiſſoluble, wonder not that my prayers to God are inceſſant, that he would preſerve you, and pour down his choiceſt bleſſings upon you.

THE more I think of you, the more I find myſelf intereſted in all that you have, and do, and are; and it is this, which heightens my affection to an inexpreſſible degree, and that you are my own fleſh and blood. What ſtronger motive can there be, moſt tenderly to love you?

I MAY truly ſay, I forget almoſt every other thing for your ſakes: ſcarcely any thing, except my children's welfare, hath any longer a place in my heart. It is natural therefore for me, to avail myſelf of the little time I have to remain upon earth, by ſeeing as much of you as poſſible.

EXCUSE me, I pray you, to my friends, when I am departed hence. Tell them, that the duties of a parent ſo far ſurpaſſed every other, that I confined my attention entirely to my family; to give

eaſe to my mind, and diſcharge my laſt duties. Aſſure them, that they had nevertheleſs a ſhare in my regard; and that the remembrance of their kindneſs dwelt on my mind to my lateſt moment. Thank them for the attention, which they have ever ſhewn me; and which, I am very ſenſible, was more than I deſerved.

The ſad commiſſion, which I am giving you to deliver to my friends, is like converſing with you after my death: e're long, you will hear your mother ſpoken of, as a ſhadow that is departed; you will then recollect all my tenderneſs, and do juſtice to my love.

CON-

CONFERENCE XIV.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

I EXPECT the return of every evening, with all the impatience that can be conceived. Neither the temporary relief of medicines, nor the chearing light of the ſun, brings me any conſolation; nothing can do this, but the happy opportunity afforded me of ſeeing and converſing with you. You will hardly believe, that I reckoned every hour of the laſt night; only grieving that they did not paſs with greater expedition, in order to haſten this pleaſing interview. Surely my tenderneſs for you

exceeds the bounds of reaſon; otherwiſe I could not preſume, in my preſent ſituation, to wiſh, that the time ſhould paſs with more rapidity than it does, when ſo very little remains for me: but let us improve that little; and let us diſcourſe this evening on the neceſſity of prudence in the choice of Friends.

If we are right in ſaying that a true friend is a treaſure; we may be equally ſure, that a falſe one is a monſter. He abuſes the confidence we place in him, to our injury; and makes ſport of the affection, which we ſhew him: there are hypocrites in friendſhip, as well as in religion.

But there is nothing, my children, more agreeable or uſeful to mankind, than friendſhip: without this, the happieſt life leaves a vacuum which can never be filled. There are a thouſand caſes,

caſes, in which we have need of counſel or aſſiſtance; a thouſand ſituations, in which we derive comfort from the ſight of a friend: he is a ſupport, in our adverſity; a *Mentor*, to recall our wandering ſteps.

GENTLENESS of manners, and a compliance of diſpoſition, will ſecure to you all the bleſſings of friendſhip: but if you are not upon your guard againſt external appearances, you will run the riſque either of having falſe friends, or of having no friend at all.

YOUR choice muſt not be determined either by an agreeable countenance, or a lively turn of converſation, or a brilliancy of wit; we are often enſnared by theſe exterior accompliſhments. But experience will teach you, that there is nothing ſo deceitful as words, and looks.

You muſt penetrate into the very ſoul of him, whom you wiſh really to know: if you liſten only to the public voice, you will find your judgment equally divided betwixt ſatire and panegyric, and you will know which ſide to take. I never knew a perſon, who had not his ſhare of good and evil report. While ſome commend him, others blame him; and it is almoſt always prejudice, which dictates both the one and the other.

But how, you will aſk, ſhall we get at the heart of him, with whom we ſeek to be united in friendſhip? Your own underſtanding will teach you the way: that will make you attentive to thoſe words and actions, which are purely natural, and unpremeditated; and which unfold the inmoſt receſſes of the heart. That will teach you to watch the prevailing

vailing inclination of the perſon, whom you wiſh to take into your boſom; and to attend to his different purſuits, and connections: that will ſhew you in the mirror of the mind, I mean the eyes, whether there be ſweetneſs, anger, or pride in him.

It is eaſy to ſtudy others, when we have been accuſtomed to ſtudy ourſelves; but unhappily this ſelf-enquiry is too much neglected. We read, with eagerneſs, books on every ſubject; but we do not give ourſelves the trouble to ſearch into that inſtructive volume, the human heart: thus it deceives us every moment; and makes us pay dearly for our negligence in this matter.

But, how great advantages would ariſe from this enquiry! We ſhould know the origin of all the evil, that we do; we ſhould learn by what means our prevailing

prevailing paſſions are moſt eaſily attacked; and we ſhould have none but real friends.

LIBERTINES and gameſters have thoſe qualities, which would only ſerve to ruin us. Not to mention, that they are levity and inconſiſtency itſelf; they communicate a love of vice, and take a pleaſure in making proſelytes, like themſelves. Every vicious man ſeeks to juſtify his conduct by the authority of others; and this he hopes to effect, by making converts: as if it were in the power of a multitude to determine virtue to be vice, or vice virtue.

IT is not in the circle of irregularity, or in the lap of pleaſure, that you will meet with minds ſuſceptible of true friendſhip; for ſhe is prudent and diſcreet: and young men enſlaved to their paſſions are intemperate and precipitate.

You

You need not ſee them more than once, to know them thoroughly: they commend nothing but pleaſure; they admire nothing but diſſipation; they ſpeak of nothing but what is injurious to religion and morality; all which are the ſtrongeſt arguments againſt the admiſſion of ſuch perſons into your friendſhip.

If you ſhould make choice of one that is fond of play; he would ſoon perſuade you, that his paſſion is a certain reſource againſt dullneſs and misfortunes; that the gaming table is the rendezvous of the beſt company; that it is very agreeable to make ſuch great intereſt of one's money; 'till, in ſhort, he prevails, and you are undone. Connect yourſelf with a man of pleaſure, and he will tell you there is no happineſs but in ſenſual gratifications; and in the end will pervert your underſtanding, and

corrupt

corrupt your affections: one inſenſibly becomes wicked, by converſing with ſuch as are wickedly diſpoſed; this is an opinion, which is confirmed by reaſon and ſad experience.

An ill-diſpoſed friend involves us in every kind of misfortune; and the wounds which he gives us are ſo much the more dangerous, becauſe he often goes down with us into the pit which he has digged for us. His kindneſs enſnares us; and though we ſee we are the dupes of his folly, we have no longer reſolution to oppoſe it.

I have already exhorted you to leave the choice of your friends to Virtue, which will preſerve you from theſe dangers. She is intelligent without ſuſpicion, and has the beſt means of diſcovering the truth; ſuch a choice is too important to excuſe our inadvertency and neglect. How

How many are there, whoſe fortune or whoſe virtue would have been ruined, had it not been for the aſſiſtance of a friend! He becomes their guide; he ſhews them a ſafe and eaſy way, and his directions are attended with the moſt happy effects. We eaſily ſuffer ourſelves to be perſuaded, when it is Friendſhip that ſpeaks: ſhe knows the diſpoſitions of the heart, and diſcovers herſelf in ſpite of every cloud and every impediment.

How happy will you be, if ever you are bleſſed with a real friend! He will be a living book, in which you may read your duty; and your own affection being joined with his, there will be only one mind, and one will betwixt you. When we are united by generous ſentiments, we mutually encourage each other to every thing that is good: there

is

is ſomething ſacred in friendſhip, when it is animated by virtue.

But we muſt not expect to find true friends, if we do not uſe our utmoſt endeavours to deſerve them: there is nothing more common than to hear people complain of the ſcarcity of friends, and nothing more rare than to ſee them ſtudious to cultivate friendſhip. We are not apt to think, that friendſhip is a commerce, which muſt be carried on at a mutual expence.

Do not accuſtom yourſelves to call any man your friend, whom you have not proved, and whom you do not know to be ſuch: be honeſt, ſincere, and agreeable yourſelves; and I will be anſwerable for it, that the bleſſings of friendſhip ſhall be your's. We form connections too haſtily, to have real friends; and we change them too often,

to

to know their value: there is too much levity to be met with every where, and only the ſhadow of friendſhip to be ſeen.

WHAT a diſmal ſtate is it, to wander about the world, without a creature in whom we can ſafely confide! to live always in reſerve with thoſe, whom we converſe with. A true friend delivers us from this reſtraint: he is of more value to us, than all the world without him. While we ſee, and converſe with him; we think of nothing that is removed at a diſtance from us.

I MYSELF experienced the bleſſing of a friend, in one, whom Providence threw in my way, when I was young: her counſels, and her excellent virtues, firſt began to ſhew me the folly and vanity of a diſſipated life. I truſt her goodneſs towards me has not failed of its reward! Were ſhe now alive, ſhe would

ſupply my place to you: my eyes have a thouſand times beſtowed the tribute of a tear upon her; and to my lateſt breath I ſhall not ceaſe to regret her loſs.

It was in the friendſhip of this excellent woman, that I learnt to raiſe my mind above the trifles of the world; and that I found by experience that our happineſs chiefly depends on the choice of a friend.

Indeed, my children, a virtuous perſon, to whom we can at all times with ſafety unboſom ourſelves, is of more uſe to us, than either books or converſation; when we are agitated by our paſſions, we ſeek an aſylum in his breaſt, and find that tranquillity, which we ſo much want.

Only make your obſervation on two faithful friends; liſten to them, and you will find in their language and their ſentiments a degree of candour and benevolence

volence that will charm you. If they deſcant on the emptineſs of earthly honours, it is the voice of reaſon; if they give an account of their affairs, it is done with the utmoſt openeſs and integrity. They adhere cloſely to the dictates of virtue; the ſtrongeſt ſupports the weaker; the wiſer inſtructs the more ignorant; each is content with his own meaſure of knowlege: and in this little ſociety, neither wiſhes to have the preeminence.

I SHOULD not ſay ſo much on the ſubject of friendſhip, if it were not ſo abſolutely neceſſary in human life. Of what ſervice may you find a friend, amidſt the perils of war! It is very poſſible that he may ſave your life; we ſee inſtances of it every day: your uncle can inform you, that after a bloody battle, he was found fallen among the dead; and

that the Count de ****, inſtigated by friendſhip, came to ſee if there were any ſigns of life in him, and delivered him from the hands of thoſe who were preparing to bury him.

You are now arrived at a proper age to think of making ſuch friends: a friendſhip, begun in our youth, is a band not eaſily to be broken. Experience will teach you, that the generality of perſons, whom you meet with in the world, are only fit for the intercourſe of common civility; and that the number of thoſe, among whom a friend is to be choſen, is very ſmall. Let this choice be directed by reaſon, as well as the affections; and you will never then have cauſe to repent of it.

We are never more ſenſible of the true value of a friend, than when we labour under any ſickneſs or misfortune.

The

The courtier paſſes by, and does not remember that he ever ſaw you; the man of the world ſends to enquire after you, and proceeds no farther: but the real friend riſques every thing; nay, quits every thing, to aſſiſt and comfort you. He divides himſelf, he multiplies himſelf; he knows no greater pleaſure than in opening his heart, and diſcovering the ſincerity of his affection: we are always ready to diſcloſe our hearts, when we have nothing but virtues to ſhew.

HEAVEN grant, that theſe reflections may imprint on your mind thoſe ſentiments, which friendſhip inſpires. This is the wiſh of your beſt and deareſt friend, who delights in ſeeing you; whoſe heart is tranſported with pleaſure in converſing with you! I am already abſolutely dead to the world; it is only

in you, that I ſeem to live and breathe. O! my too tenderly beloved children! to what an orphan-ſtate are you about to be reduced! Where are the perſons, whom you will hereafter call by the ſacred name of friends? How happy ſhould I be, to know them! How extremely dear would they be to me! I ſhould conſider them, as ſupplying my place in your affections. I ſhould conjure them to be for ever attached to you; both out of tenderneſs for you, and compaſſion for me.

ALAS! my whole ſoul is diſordered by ſuch reflections as theſe: all my thoughts are thrown in confuſion; and nothing remains to me, but the pain of loſing you; a pain, which has yet a mixture of pleaſure, even while it overwhelms me: and which, indeed, I would not but feel, for all the world.

THAT

THAT ever I ſhould be deſtined to experience ſuch a contrariety of ſenſations! My heart ſeems to be divided, and my ſoul is in a ſtate of diſtraction; my tenderneſs is agitated at the ſame time by ſentiments of a quite different nature: what a ſtrange ſituation! My love of my children, whilſt it heightens my joy, embitters my ſorrow. If my affection is properly returned by you, I ſhall have abundant reaſon to be ſatisfied: yet do I ſtill lament your fate.

CONFERENCE XV.

ON THE COURT.

AS it is my deſign to give you ſome inſtructions in relation to every circumſtance of your life, I think I ought to ſay ſomething to you on the ſubject of the Court. The ſpot, which you will have occaſion moſt frequently to viſit, is the moſt reſpectable part of the kingdom, as being the reſidence of the ſovereign. There it is, that the hearts of of all his ſubjects ſhould be fixed; thence it is, that favours and benefits are wont to flow.

BUT you muſt know that, ſelf-love and our own intereſt being the firſt mover almoſt in every action, they who frequent the court are carried thither by motives of ambition, and a thirſt for promotion: this is the center, to which every thing tends. It is here that the vehemence of deſire, and the flame of paſſion are kindled; here it is that courtiers pine away with envy and impatience; and there is ſcarcely any one, who does not feel himſelf in an uneaſy ſituation. One is afraid of loſing his place, another is apprehenſive that he ſhall get nothing; and as neither of them will venture to utter his real ſentiments, either that he may not expoſe himſelf, or that he may not reveal his ſecret, they both live in a ſtate of perpetual diſſimulation.

THIS

THIS accounts for our finding more ſuſpicion and miſtruſt at court than any where elſe; and hence it is, that it is the place in the world in which men are leaſt apt to expreſs their thoughts and inclinations. When this precaution does not exceed the bounds of prudence, we cannot but commend it; but when it degenerates into duplicity, it is doubtleſs a very great fault.

EXPECT then to find, within the precincts of a court, only perſons of very great prudence or of great reſerve; and to ſee only looks, whoſe meaning you cannot underſtand. They often laugh, when they have great cauſe to weep; and ſometimes weep, when they have occaſion to rejoice. They publicly praiſe their enemies, if they happen to be favourites at court; and they cenſure even their friends, if they chance to be out of favour.

ſavour. Fortune is the compaſs by which the courſe of their friendſhip is directed; the thermometer, which ſhews the degree of warmth or coolneſs, with which people are to be addreſſed.

You will ſee, that openeſs and freedom are not the current coin of this place; and that the only way to maintain your ground there is to pay a proper reſpect to all, but to place confidence in none. Never to ſay the leaſt evil of any, becauſe the weakeſt has power to hurt; to confine yourſelves within your proper ſphere; and to have nothing to do with intrigues or cabals. To aſk no favours, or at leaſt to uſe the utmoſt diſcretion in aſking them; to give no occaſion either for panegyric or ſatire. Equally to avoid the haughty appearance of pride, and the mean artifices of flattery; to preſerve at all times an

eveneſs

eveneſs of temper, and never to ſhew too much ſenſibility. People are apt to miſtruſt a man of wit and humour; they ſuppoſe that he is always deſigning; and they ſuſpect, that what he ſays is not ſincere.

Lay down theſe maxims for the direction of your conduct; and I will venture to aſſure you, that whatever dangers may attend the court, it will have none to enſnare you. It is not the path of ambition, which I am pointing out to you, but that of an honeſt man; who ſeeks to get the better of his own faults, and only aſpires after true happineſs. The ambitious man hazards all for all: if his exaltation may render him conſpicuous, his fall may be utterly deſtructive to him. Whereas with virtue, and a generous moderation, we leave fortune

to

to act as ſhe pleaſes; neither coveting her favours, nor dreading her frowns.

It is doubtleſs a very pleaſing ſituation to be honoured with the confidence of a royal maſter, and to be employed in his name to partake of the concerns of government. But how much trouble and diſappointment muſt you expect, before you arrive at ſuch a poſt of honour! And what perpetual inquietude muſt you ſuffer to maintain it! You will not have a moment, that you can call your own; your time muſt be wholly devoted to public affairs. And you muſt be intent on juſtifying the choice which your ſovereign has made of you, by inceſſant induſtry, and by an unwearied anxiety for the general welfare.

I have ſeen enough of the court, and of the manner of courtiers, to be able to aſſure you, that no one there is happy,

happy, but he who desires nothing. Is it not a sufficient honour and privilege to be permitted to approach our prince; to be known by him, and to have it in our power to shew by our assiduity, how much we love him, and how desirous we are to serve him?

When we are only engaged in consulting the interest of our King, we find a court the residence of true greatness and virtue; but when we think only of our own interest, we find there nothing but intrigues, and jealousy, and dissimulation. It is not the sovereigns, or their family, which render the court a place of danger; but the faulty passions which we carry thither, and which an ambitious desire of advancement puts in a state of fermentation. A prince cannot see every thing himself; and as the greatest part of his courtiers are accustomed

tomed to diſguiſe, his court does not appear to him ſuch as it really is.

You muſt above all things beware of learning there that political refinement, which has not the leaſt connection with truth; that fondneſs for luxury, which plunges us into idle expences; that effeminacy, which enervates both the body and mind; that haughtineſs of ſpirit, which knows no pleaſure but that of depreſſing others. A good diſpoſition will imitate nothing but virtues; bad examples ſerve only to render it more circumſpect and attentive to its duty.

If it be true, that a court has its inconveniences, it is no leſs true that it has alſo great advantages: it is the centre of true politeneſs; it is the reſidence of the pureſt language; a certain mode of behaviour there prevails, which is not

not elſewhere to be found, and which characteriſes perſons of quality. It is there we become acquainted with the neceſſary forms, and what is uſually called *etiquette:* the manner of behaving ourſelves with gracefulneſs, and of expreſſing ourſelves with propriety; of receiving others with dignity, and of writing with elegance and eaſe. You will not have continued there long, without learning the art of being polite without impertinence, reſerved without ſtiffneſs, ſteady without rudeneſs, and grave without affectation. Courtiers ſay many things in few words: they know every thing, yet pretend to know nothing; that is, they are ſo guarded, that you can neither gueſs what are their real ſentiments, nor quote their authority for what they ſay.

CHOOSE thoſe characters for your examples, which are moſt generally eſteemed: there are always to be found at court, venerable peers, whoſe company is the ſchool of honour and integrity; reſpectable ladies, whoſe example is a leſſon of virtue. Theſe are the perſons, to whom you will do well moſt intimately to attach yourſelves: you will gain their good will by liſtening to them with attention; by frequenting their company; by a well ſupported conduct, and by modeſty and diſcretion. The court is only dangerous to thoſe, who give themſelves up to pleaſure or ambition; we can every where find bad examples, when we give ourſelves the trouble to look after them.

IF you ſhould have a place at court, you will do well to remember that it is only borrowed; and be always ready to

reſign it: this will be the ſureſt means of confirming you in it, and of ſecuring you from any fear of revolutions. Courts are like ground that is undermined: when we think ourſelves moſt ſecure, we are in the moſt imminent danger of falling in.

If you only appear there to pay the reſpect, which is due from you; if you are only anxious to procure eſteem; behave yourſelves with politeneſs to all the world: and above all things avoid the character of news-mongerers, or banterers; the leaſt degree of raillery is always ill received. The court is the reſidence of extreme diſcretion; they are always talking there, without affirming any thing.

There is no place in the world in which there is more wit; and in which it is more dangerous to ſhew it. Shew nothing

nothing there but plain good ſenſe; that, you will find, is the way to commit no faults, and to have no enemies: we cannot be too circumſpect, when we live in the midſt of a world, in which every thing is ſeen, and every thing is blazed abroad.

NEVER boaſt that you have intereſt, if fortune ſhould give it you: either you will be beſet by dependents, whoſe applications you muſt refuſe, and which a good heart ſuffers greatly in refuſing; or you muſt be always aſking favours, and thereby weakening your own intereſt.

AVOID the ſociety of intriguing women; they almoſt always ruin thoſe, whom they appear to protect. Their counſels ſeduce; they fan the flames of ambition; and all they aim at is to form

parties, of which you will at length become the victim.

PAY no regard to the friendſhip, which they profeſs for you, or to the queſtions, which they will not fail to aſk you. Their friendſhip may be ſincere, but it may perhaps be inſidious; and in a matter of doubt, prudence preſcribes, that we ſteer clear of danger. There are too many jarring intereſts at court, to think that people there are diſintereſted.

WHAT I am now recommending to you is not craftineſs, but prudence; you will not be leſs the friends to truth, for knowing how to hold your peace, and act with reſerve: it is a kind of policy which religion allows, and which it calls by the name of diſcretion.

WE find fault with the court, as being the region of toilſome attendance and

and fatigue; and not without reaſon, when we give ourſelves up to idleneſs and pleaſure. But if you are fond of reading, and make temperance the rule of your conduct, you will find yourſelves as happy there, as in any other place. Satiety belongs only to thoſe who purſue ſenſual pleaſures alone, and who wiſh to be always enjoying them: let *your* happineſs center in your own minds, and it will always then be at your command.

But enough, my children, on this ſubject: Experience will teach you the reſt; ſhe is an admirable inſtructreſs; and it is to her I refer myſelf, every time I converſe with you. But it is impoſſible for you to conceive what agitation my mind ſuſtains, while I am giving you theſe directions for your future conduct. I cannot help wiſhing to

look into futurity, that I might know whether the counſel which I give you is exactly ſuch as will be of uſe to you hereafter; or whether you will be diſpoſed to follow it at all. I am always thinking, and therefore it is no wonder that I am inceſſantly repeating, how dreadful is the ſituation of that mother, who wiſhes to attend her children thro' their whole life, but is obliged to leave them: who is earneſtly deſirous to know in what manner they will hereafter conduct themſelves, what will become of them; and yet cannot, with all her efforts of foreſight and tenderneſs, go one ſtep beyond the preſent hour.

It is a melancholy reflection, that I am at this time anxious to give you advice for the regulation of a life, which perhaps will very ſoon be taken away from you. Who knows, alas! but that the

the firſt campaign may carry you off, in the midſt of all your hopes; and in the flower of that youth, of which you are at preſent in the full enjoyment? Some unexpected accident may perhaps open *your* tomb, almoſt as ſoon as mine is ſhut. Yet no apprehenſion of this kind ought ever to induce you to decline from your duty. Such, however, are the ſad reflections, which diſtract my mind; ariſing doubtleſs, in part, from the increaſing weakneſs of my outward frame. They hang over me like a thick cloud, which I am unable to remove.

To my own lot I am no ſtranger; my preſent ſolicitude ariſes from my ignorance what will be yours. O! that death would execute all its power upon me; rather than torment me with theſe melancholy thoughts, which caſt down my ſoul, and fill me with diſquiet.

HEAVEN has ordained, my children, that I ſhould be taken away from you at a time, when I am deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of my duty, and am exceedingly deſirous to diſcharge it. Alas! how many mothers are there, who live in perfect indifference about their children! How many, who only regard their pleaſures; while I have only one reaſon for wiſhing to live, that I might be of uſe to you: and that I might be inſtrumental in preſerving you from thoſe dangers, to which your youth is about to be expoſed!

GRIEVOUS indeed was the ſtroke, when it was the will of heaven to deprive you of your father; it now ſeemeth good to the ſame unſearchable wiſdom, to double your affliction. Submit therefore in all humility to that diſpenſation, which not the moſt coſtly ſacri-

fices,

fices, nor all that your affection could poſſibly prompt you to beſtow, will be able to avert.

But, what do I ſay? You may perhaps imagine, that the proſpect of death diſquiets me; whereas death hath utterly loſt its ſting. You will not I hope ſuſpect, that I am unwilling to ſubmit to the will of Providence, all whoſe deſigns I humbly and reverently adore. Pardon, gracious Lord, the expiring efforts of parental affection; which overcomes me, in my preſent ſtate of languor and decay.

CONFERENCE XVI.

ON THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

THE ſubject of this evening's converſation ſhall be that infallible characteriſtic of a generous mind, the Love of Truth. You cannot but know, that nothing is more deteſtable than falſehood; and that whoever deviates from truth is held in utter contempt.

BE aſſured, my dear children, you will no longer be eſteemed, than while you ſtrictly adhere to truth. The world, corrupt as it is, never yet ſpoke of a liar with reſpect; it even proteſts againſt thoſe flattering compliments, which lead

us

us to commend thoſe that are unworthy of praiſe: ſo certain is it, that truth is always acceptable, and that her rights are never to be invaded with impunity.

WHAT would you ſay of me, my children, if you found that the affection, which I profeſs to bear towards you, was all diſſembled; and that my words were the language of impoſture: that the regret which I have expreſſed at being removed from you, and ſeeing you no more, was merely the effect of artifice and inſincerity? Doubtleſs you would be offended to ſee me trifle with truth, and proſtitute parental affection. But be aſſured, the contrary is true; each word, that I utter, is the dictate of ſincereſt love: nor do I think it neceſſary to juſtify myſelf in this reſpect.

ALAS! of what uſe would it be to me, to aſſume the character of an anx-

ious

ious or afflicted mother? This would be far enough from giving you pleaſure; nor can I have the leaſt intereſt in impoſing upon you. If I wiſhed to do it, in order to make myſelf of ſome conſequence in the world, death is about to remove me from it; and I have nothing here below to expect, but the ſtroke it is about to give me.

CONSIGNED in a very ſhort time to the regions of eternal ſilence, I ſhall neither know what is ſaid, nor what is thought of me. None of the concerns of this life will any longer affect me, except perhaps the love which I bear you; and which will, I hope, be perfected in endleſs joy, on ſeeing you again, received into the regions of eternal life.

THAT truth, which is ſo amiable and conſpicuous upon earth, is no other than

an

an emanation from, and as it were the image of, the Deity: and the reaſon why we hold it in ſuch high eſtimation is, becauſe we know that it proceeds from heaven. How great is its beauty, how clear is its light, when it penetrates the heart and ſoul! From the moment of its entrance, the mind becomes the ſeat of equity and candour: all writings, which are deſtitute of truth, are calculated only to miſlead; all men, who diſregard it in their manners or diſcourſe, are objects of our pity or contempt.

Let truth then be the guide of your conduct, the firſt principle of your actions, as hereby a very material point will be gained: you will not then ſuffer yourſelves to be ſeduced by evil cuſtoms, or bad companions: your character will not then be marked by diſſimulation and duplicity; your words, and looks, and actions will be uniformly true. You

You have happily choſen thoſe ſtations in life, in which truth is more particularly indiſpenſable: a ſoldier without the ſtricteſt honour, and an eccleſiaſtic without the moſt rigid veracity, are men ſo truly infamous, that they are looked upon with indignation. Honeſty knows but one kind of language. When we have recourſe to equivocal expreſſions, we no longer deſerve to be eſteemed ſtrictly honeſt: we are not indeed obliged always to ſpeak all kinds of truth; but we are never allowed to ſay any thing, which is not true.

It is becauſe men are too apt to loſe ſight of theſe maxims, that the world is full of flattery and inſincerity. You may obſerve, that unfortunately there ſeems to be a kind of emulation in the art of deceiving one another; and that almoſt in every company the ſhocking cuſtom is

is but too prevalent, of praiſing people to their faces, and cenſuring them the moment their backs are turned. This ſpecies of treachery has always been exceedingly offenſive to me; eſpecially becauſe the party ſo treated, being abſent, is unable to defend himſelf: it is cutting a man's throat, without allowing him the poſſibility of crying out for ſuccour.

YOUR father, whoſe example I always propoſe to you with pleaſure, becauſe I I well knew his excellent qualities; your father, I ſay, had an utter abhorrence of liars and evil-ſpeakers. He conſidered them as birds of prey, which only ſeek to ſurprize and devour: the liar lays his ſnares, the ſlanderer ſtabs you with a dagger.

O! HOW amiable is truth! Her empire is deſcribed by the poets as running parallel

parallel with the Golden Age: the tongue was then the faithful interpreter of the heart; then mutual love prevailed, and each party expreſſed it without diſguiſe. The world, as it grows old, grows more corrupt; the very nature of truth is changed; and falſehood too often dwells on the lips even of thoſe, who have had every advantage of education. What in fact are all idle compliments, but the art of ſaying agreeable things which mean nothing, and of lulling people into an utter inſenſibility of their faults? I would by no means have you rigidly ſevere; but I would never have you ſacrifice truth to complaiſance. Truth is an inexhauſtible ſpring, from which innumerable ſtreams are derived, whoſe purity may be defiled many different ways. Some depart from it by equivocation; ſome by mental

mental reſervations: neither of them recollecting, that to be a lover of truth is the greateſt ornament of man.

SUCH language, I well know, would be incomprehenſible to meer courtiers; but I hope I am not giving inſtructions to perſons, who are ambitious of that ſort of life. The principles, which I am inculcating, will never introduce you to it; if they do, my inſtructions muſt be ſtrangely miſunderſtood. Nothing would affect me more, than to know that my children would be mean flatterers, capable of deceiving their maſter, and of betraying the intereſts of the public. The very idea fills me with horror. No: heaven, I truſt, will not ſuffer ambition to take ſuch poſſeſſion of your hearts, as to lead you to any unwarrantable exceſs. That you may never run into it, ſhall be my conſtant

prayer; and your good diſpoſitions give me cauſe to hope, that my wiſhes will be accompliſhed.

If you improve in knowlege and virtue, as I hope you will, you will be ſenſible of the importance of keeping your word, and never contradicting your real ſentiments: what is it, but to act in two oppoſite characters, when we outwardly approve what we inwardly condemn?

If he, who is regardleſs of truth, knew what he loſes by his want of uprightneſs and integrity, he would account himſelf unworthy of ſociety. It is impoſſible to eſteem ſuch a perſon; no one ventures to entruſt him with the moſt trifling ſecret; and even when he ſpeaks the truth, he is not believed. Other vices may be concealed, but falſehood is almoſt always diſcovered; and often-

oftentimes the liar is betrayed by himſelf.

RECEIVE inſtruction on this point from thoſe old officers, whoſe names are an honour to their profeſſion; and you will know how to regard truth as ſhe deſerves. It is in their ſchool we learn, that our life itſelf is not too dear a price to lay down, in her behalf; that eſteem is the companion of integrity; and that every promiſe which we make, without performing it, is an inſtance of falſehood which deſerves to be puniſhed.

IN proportion as I enter more deeply into reflections upon death, I diſcover how neceſſary it is to regard truth. No perſon in my ſituation can avoid moſt highly reſpecting her, and renouncing every ſpecies of falſehood and diſſimulation. They may indeed be found in books, or in ſociety; but in the eyes of

thoſe who ſtand on the brink of the grave, they are lighter than vanity itſelf. Such perſons eſteem nothing more than veracity. Adhere to it, my children, as long as you live, and the bleſsing of heaven will reſt upon you. Hate evil-ſpeaking; and be as ſlow to believe, as you are backward to utter, any thing to another's diſadvantage.

TRUTH affords the greateſt delight to a perſon of a liberal mind: he finds it in himſelf, and among all his friends; becauſe he is connected only with ſuch, as are pure and upright like himſelf.

ALL I have to add is, that, if a ſingle inſtance of falſehood would eſtabliſh your fortune, you ought to prefer a life of indigence before wealth ſo dearly purchaſed. Honour and religion unite their influence in recommending this love of truth: it may not perhaps be altogether

faſhionable

faſhionable to think, and act thus; but your lives are not to be regulated by the dictates of faſhion.

THE exertion of my ſpirits, in converſing with you on theſe intereſting topics, may perhaps haſten my death a few days: but what is ſuch a loſs to a mother, who would freely ſacrifice ages for your good, if ſhe had them in her own diſpoſal? I know I can only remain upon earth, ſo long as I continue to live in your hearts; and that the way to do this, is to ſtore them with my ſentiments.

RESTRAIN your tears, I beſeech you; and let me not ſuffer what is worſe than death, by ſeeing you overwhelmed with exceſſive grief: it is enough for me to die myſelf, without ſeeing you in danger of being the victims of immoderate ſorrow on my account. It is true you

will very ſoon be orphans; but you will be the objects of the divine protection: his Providence never fails to watch over thoſe, who apply to him for ſuccour, with an honeſt and upright heart.

I HAVE lived about nine and thirty years; and there have been thouſands, whoſe lives would have been more uſeful, that were not permitted to live near ſo long. I ſhould have been too happy, if I had lived to ſee you ſettled in the world; and had choſen myſelf the parts, which you were deſtined to perform. Gracious heaven! whither doth this reflection carry me? O! painful affection, which adds to the weight of my ſufferings, and imbitters the dregs of the cup of death!

CON-

CONFERENCE XVII.

ON BROTHERLY LOVE.

UNDER an hourly apprehenſion of death, I am aſtoniſhed to find myſelf again converſing with you. Who can leſs reckon upon the return of to-morrow, than one, who is already reduced to a ſkeleton? It is the will of heaven, that the undue attention, which I have formerly paid to this wretched body of mine, ſhould be recompenſed by my being an eye-witneſs of its total decay: wherever I turn my eyes, I ſee nothing but the ſad tokens of my approaching diſſolution.

THERE are however ſome inſtructions, which I yet wiſh to give you; and that which I intend for the preſent is not one of the leaſt important. It relates to the harmony which ought to ſubſiſt betwixt you all; and without which, you muſt never expect any peace or comfort in each other. I have therefore called you *all* together, becauſe the preſent ſubject of my inſtructions equally concerns you all: this union only can repair the loſs you will ſuſtain by the death of your parents, and it will deliver you from a thouſand inconveniences and embarraſſments.

ALL families go to decay, when they are diſtracted by law-ſuits; they are torn aſunder, they devour each other, they mutually wiſh each other's ruin: where a cordial affection does not ſubſiſt, there is nothing but confuſion. I have ſeen

ſome

ſome great families reduced by this to indigence: a wretched ſelf-intereſted ſpirit had ſowed tares in the heart of each individual belonging to them.

It is covetouſneſs, which embroils the neareſt relations; for the ſake of a little pelf, men are contented to break the bonds of conſanguinity and friendſhip: whereas the treaſures of the whole univerſe are not worthy to be compared with the happineſs of living in peace and unity. Alas! poor mortals of a day! how ſolicitous are they about their earthly concerns, as if they were to dwell upon the earth for ever!

With what deep concern ſhould I be filled, if I foreſaw that my property could poſſibly be the occaſion of ſtrife betwixt you! I ſhould in that caſe wiſh, with all my heart, to have no other inheritance to leave you, but peace and virtue:

virtue: but I flatter myſelf, *meum* and *tuum*, that wretched diſtinction which ſo often ſeparates chief friends, will never be allowed to interrupt your friendſhip. Nothing upon earth ſhould be permitted to violate the bond of brotherly love.

SPRUNG from the ſame parents, brothers naturally contract the moſt intimate union from their very birth. This friendſhip often grows up amidſt their exerciſes and their ſports; and increaſes, as their hearts unfold themſelves, and their affections are enlarged. An huſband has not always known his wife; oftentimes indeed he knows little or nothing of her, before marriage. But brothers and ſiſters have had the ſame cradle, the ſame examples, the ſame inſtructions, and have lived in the ſame way; ſo that they are doubly to blame, if any matter of intereſt is ſuffered to divide

vide them. The more inducements we have to live in union, the more clearly do we demonſtrate the evil diſpoſition of our hearts, when we give the leaſt encouragement to diſſenſion.

If ever you ſhould be tempted to diſagree with each other, you will do well to eſtimate, what it would coſt you to ſupport your animoſity, thro' the forms of a tedious and expenſive law-ſuit; and I will anſwer for it, that you will never be induced to carry matters to this cruel extremity. Alas! the voice of conſanguinity is not ſuppreſſed with impunity: ſhe always maintains her rights; and a generous mind can never forget them, without doing the utmoſt violence to itſelf.

I have ever obſerved, with the utmoſt ſatisfaction and delight, your affectionate diſpoſition towards each other;

ther; and I am perſuaded that the harmony, which hath hitherto prevailed betwixt you, has been as much the effect of congenial ſentiments, as of your own good ſenſe. I thank heaven for it; and I earneſtly beſeech you to preſerve this concord uninterrupted. Remember, that if it is conducive to your preſent advantage to be united, it will not leſs contribute to your future ſatisfaction; the longer ſuch an union continues, the firmer it will become, and the more ſenſible you will be of the bleſſings which attend it.

ALAS! how many unhappy families are there, who, having broken the bonds of friendſhip, are reſtrained, by a falſe ſhame, from mutual conceſſions, for the ſake of reſtoring peace! Self-intereſt muſt have a ſtrange aſcendancy over our hearts; before the early impreſſions of love

love and friendſhip can be thoroughly effaced, ſo as to cool our affections towards thoſe whom we once cordially loved.

I DECLARE to you, I feel in my heart ſo many reaſons for the love of a brother, that it does not appear to me poſſible to entertain any ſentiment like averſion towards him: if I am miſtaken, I hope you will always be in the ſame error with myſelf.

IF you once taſte the pleaſure of an intimate union with each other, nothing can be equal to your ſatisfaction: your harveſts will be crowned with peace; your property will be in a manner common; there will be only one heart, and one ſoul, betwixt you. We deſpiſe brothers who quarrel with one another; and chicanery employs all her arts to ruin them both.

VIRTUE is only to be found in the regions of peace and love: every kingdom, divided againſt itſelf, is brought to deſolation. Rather give up a portion of your goods, than forfeit the bleſſings of peace: this example was ſet you by your father. He choſe rather to recede from his juſt rights, than to engage in a law-ſuit with his near relations; ſuch conduct is highly worthy of your imitation.

WE are all ready enough to bewail the diſmal effects of thoſe wars, which, for the ſake of an acceſſion of territories, plunge whole nations into the depths of miſery and deſtruction. And yet for a few yards of land we perſecute each other without remorſe; can there be a greater inconſiſtency can this?

THE world abounds with perſons, who, inheriting the eſtates of their friends, neglect

neglect to diſcharge the moſt ſacred duties, in order to gratify their boundleſs deſires. The departed friend is no ſooner interred, than they ſeize on his effects with the utmoſt eagerneſs, and inſiſt on the privilege of plundering his houſe. Could I think you capable of ſuch rapacity, I would rather wiſh that you ſhould take poſſeſſion of every thing I have, while I live, than diſhonour both yourſelves and me by quarrels after my death. My riches are yours; and I ſhould really be pleaſed to have you make an immediate diviſion of them among yourſelves: I ſhall want very little, for the ſhort time I have to live.

THERE is ſomething horrible in the love of money: it breaks the ſtrongeſt ties; it is utterly regardleſs of the cries of the wretched; it deſpiſes the cenſures of the world; it leads us into the greateſt

eſt crimes. When we thirſt after riches, we deſpiſe virtue as a thing of nought: even the ſoul itſelf is diſregarded, when this paſſion is predominant; hence ſo many eſtates indirectly obtained! hence ſo many inſtances of inhumanity to the diſtreſſed!

But what is a palace, however brilliant, in which there is neither peace, nor virtue? It is the ſeat of tumult and wickedneſs, in the eye of reaſon: how much better is it to dwell in an humble cottage, and enjoy the bleſſings of concord and tranquility!

The riches, which we acquire by diſhoneſt means, are ſeldom of a long duration. Heaven oftentimes, no doubt as a puniſhment for the poſſeſſors, cauſeth them to paſs away like a vapour: every inheritance becomes in ſome ſort unlawful, when we only poſſeſs it by

by diſſolving the ties of family-affection.

I THANK GOD, that covetouſneſs never took poſſeſſion of my heart; I always conſidered that vice, as the portion of a baſe mind. If your ſentiments are not ſordid, you will think the ſame: the love of your relations will appear in your eyes far preferable to all the treaſures in the world; and you will never think yourſelves truly rich, but when thoſe who are neareſt allied to you are your *beſt* friends. What a comfort is it to live in the midſt of thoſe of our own family, without diſcord, without miſtruſt; and to be able to find, within the circle of our own relations, all the aſſiſtance we ſtand in need of! This indeed deſerves the name of true happineſs.

WHAT can I do more, my dear children, to inſpire you with the love of unity and peace; except it be to deſire you will approach the couch, on which you ſee your mother almoſt expiring? In this very room it was, that I implored the mercy of heaven towards you, the moment you were born; that your ſouls might be filled with wiſdom and benevolence: and hither muſt you direct your eyes, that you may inceſſantly recall the powerful motives, which ought to unite you to each other. Conſider theſe walls, as ready to witneſs againſt you, if you ſhould ever preſume to violate the bands of fraternal affection.

As for you, my beloved Daughter, I recommend you moſt earneſtly to the kind attention of your brothers: who, I truſt, will pity the dangerous ſituation of your tender youth, and always continue

nue inviolably attached to you. And do you, on your part, never forget, that your happineſs may greatly depend on cultivating their friendſhip. Reject with ſcorn the advice of ſuch, as would—— But I muſt ceaſe; a cloud this moment overſpreads me, which darkens both my viſual and intellectual ſight. Adieu! ——my anxiety for you will prove more fatal to me, than the diſeaſe, under which I labour: it urges me to ſpeak, at a time when the extremity of my weakneſs will not ſuffer me to proceed! What a ſtruggle betwixt them both!

CONFERENCE XVIII.

ON RELIGION.

A DAY in my preſent weak ſtate is too precious, to be paſſed over by me, without employing it in diſcourſing with you on the ſubject of Religion; in explaining to you what it is, and what are the demands which it makes upon you. I am thankful for that meaſure of divine knowlege which hath taught me, that nothing can equal the happineſs of being engaged in the ſervice of God. Be aſſured, you will never be happy, but while you live in obedience to His laws.

ALL the inſtructions, which I have hitherto given you, would be very defective indeed, if they did not lead you to Chriſtianity. An honeſt and an amiable man are only ſketches of virtue: religion muſt fill up, and finiſh, the picture.

I WILL not enter upon a diſcuſſion of the ſeveral kinds of religious worſhip. It is ſufficient to ſay, that we believe Chriſtianity to be eſtabliſhed on the foundation of reaſon, ſcripture, and truth; and that they, who have preſumed to level their attacks againſt it, are ſcattered as the duſt before the wind. This is a fact which hiſtory will ſufficiently atteſt, and of the truth of which you will be thoroughly convinced, if you read it with attention: it is only the ſtrength of our paſſions which blinds our ſight in this matter.

I NEVER knew a man of real virtue decry religion; men only attack its precepts and inſtructions, becauſe it preſcribes mortification and ſelf-denial. The libertine condemns religion, only to revenge himſelf on it for the reſtraints which it lays upon him: he is like a man who, having been caſt in a law-ſuit, endeavours to defend himſelf, by accuſing his judges of partiality and iniquity.

IF ever you liſten to ſuch people, and adopt their idle objections to the truth, you are undone; your hearts will ſoon be corrupted; like the heart of that fool upon ſacred record, who preſumed to ſay in it, "There is no God." We begin with liſtening to blaſphemy, and we finiſh with uttering it ourſelves.

WHEN I am tormented with frightful apprehenſions on this ſubject, my comfort

fort is, that you have had the bleſſing of a Chriſtian education: I recall to my remembrance thoſe holy ſacraments, whereby you have been initiated and ſtrengthened; thoſe reſolutions, by which you have ſo often engaged yourſelf to ſerve your GOD with fidelity. All theſe conſiderations fill me with a confident aſſurance, that my children will continue faithful members of the church in which they were born and educated; and never diſhonour the Religion of their Saviour by an immoral or irreligious conduct.

INDEED if I had any doubts in this matter, I ſhould weep inceſſantly for you; my ſoul would be caſt down with the moſt horrible inquietude: and I ſhould be ready to curſe the very day, in which I brought you into the world. I ſhould no longer be a mother, moſt

tenderly

tenderly attached to her children; but a wretched woman, that had given them up, to vindicate the honour of God. How infinitely are both you and myſelf indebted to Him! how wonderfully doth He vouchſafe to comfort and ſupport even me, whom am but duſt and aſhes. How, good heavens! can I ſufficiently acknowlege this great mercy!

It is the Chriſtian religion alone, which intimately unites us with the Deity. While we walk under the direction of her light, we are in no danger of loſing our way; we find her preſent in all our neceſſities. She never forſakes us in any of our diſtreſſes; ſhe makes us amends, for all the loſſes we ſuſtain; ſhe attends us, even to the grave; in her boſom we live, in her arms we expire.

RELIGION ſanctifies our actions; and furniſhes the ſoul with infinite conſolation, by ſetting before it the hope of an Everlaſting Recompence. In what deep diſtreſs ſhould I now be involved, if, being about to loſe you, whom I love more dearly than myſelf, I had no reſource in the treaſures of heaven! A fatal deſpair would ſeize upon my ſoul; I ſhould ſink into the horrors of annihilation, and ſhould expire full of rage and fury.

BUT, O my GOD, the confidence which I have, that I ſhall ſee and enjoy Thee, calms my grief; and aſſures me, that in Thee I have what is much more precious to me than the whole univerſe, even more than my children themſelves, though ſo exceedingly dear to me.

THUS it is, that our holy religion flies to our ſuccour in the midſt of evils; the

more afflictive they are, the more abundant are her conſolations. How happy will you be, if you obſerve her maxims! nothing can then render you miſerable. You will perceive the hand of GOD in every occurrence of your life, however trivial in appearance: you will acknowlege his wiſdom in every leaf that ſhooteth, in every inſect that creepeth, in every grain of duſt that you tread under your feet. You will know that He is the author of life and death; that He directs our thoughts, liſtens to our ſighs, enable us to behold and declare the wonders of his Providence.

How many days, alas! have I paſſed without reflecting on theſe truths! The world is a ſtream, which always carries us away, far from GOD, and from ourſelves.

IN

In the eyes of the man of this world, religion is a mere engine of ſtate policy: the profane wit treats it as a fable. But to him who liſtens to its dictates, and learns from it to renounce his paſſions, it is no other than truth itſelf. Conſider it as your duty to become acquainted with religion; ſhe fears nothing, except that men ſhould be ignorant of her excellence.

In vain hath impoſture painted Chriſtianity in the falſeſt colours; it cannot name a ſingle error, which ſhe approves; or point out a ſingle truth, which ſhe condemns; nor can an inſtance be produced of any one, who ever repented of being a Chriſtian. Self-reproach is the portion only of thoſe perverſe men, who ſcoff at religion: ſcarce doth a fit of ſickneſs ſeize them, but they ſmite upon their breaſts in deſpair, and bewail their impiety.

impiety. The moment of death is that of truth. If religion would tolerate vice; they, who are now her bittereſt adverſaries, would repreſent her as lovely and delightful, and earneſtly eſpouſe her cauſe.

I NEED not tell you, that it is not neceſſary to practice works of piety, in order to procure the character of an *honeſt* man; it is ſufficient for this purpoſe, merely to abſtain from injuring your neighbour: but honeſty is always in danger of being loſt, when it is not ſupported by religion. When we do not admit into our ſyſtem a Deity, who takes cognizance of our actions, and who will either reward or puniſh us, we live like brute creatures; we give the reins to our luſts in every action, which we hope will eſcape the eyes of men.

ONLY

ONLY obſerve thoſe unbelievers, who live without faith and hope; attend a little to their words, and actions: their ſyſtem of morality is abominable; and if their manners are corrupt, this is only a neceſſary conſequence. The fear of man is not a ſufficient bridle to reſtrain us; it may ſometimes hinder evil actions, but it lays no reſtraint on evil deſires.

IRRELIGION leads to all kinds of exceſs: in her eſtimation the moſt horrid crimes are ſoftened into gallantry. And the ſoul itſelf! dreadful imagination! that ſoul, which was created in the image of GOD, is only a particle of matter, which death is about to annihilate. See to what height this new philoſophy raiſes us! you cannot conſider it without horror.

Is it poſſible, LORD, that my mind ſhould be filled with ſuch exalted ideas of thy perfections, with ſo ardent a deſire of being for ever united to thee; and that after all, my lot ſhould be that of a crawling inſect? Is it poſſible, that religion, the practice whereof is ſo holy; whoſe outward appearance is ſo amiable; which has filled me with ſo much comfort; which inſpires me with ſo much reſolution, in the midſt of my ſorrows and afflictions: is it poſſible, that ſuch a religion ſhould be a mere illuſion and chimæra? Away with ſuch deceitful dreams. My fleſh may decay, and my tomb open itſelf to receive me; but I foreſee a never-ending life awaits me: and the GOD, whom I adore, will crown me with unſpeakable joy, if I am ſo happy as to depart this life in fear and love.

THIS

THIS idea, my dear children, already fills my ſoul with tranſport; methinks I already ſee time end, and Eternity—— But ſuffer me, a moment, to give up my whole attention to this ſublime ſubject; ſuffer me for a while to forget the world, and to think only of Heaven.—

HERE ſhe continued loſt for ſome time in the depth of her reflection; but afterwards, recovering herſelf, ſhe reſumed her diſcourſe.

NATURE has certainly made *you* more dear to me, than any other poſſeſſion in this world: but Religion is an additional tie of affection, by which you are more ſtrongly united to me. When I reflect on our alliance by conſanguinity; I conſider you as children faſhioned and formed within me, of whom death will very ſoon deprive me: but, by the light of faith, I behold you, as the children of

GOD

God himſelf, created by His power, redeemed by His mercy, and deſtined to live with me for ever in the regions of eternal happineſs.

Without ſuch ideas as theſe, ſo capable of raiſing and comforting the ſoul, a mother knows nothing ſuperior to that ſort of fondneſs, which the brute creature ſhews towards its young: affection, which is merely earthly, is nothing more than pure inſtinct. Whereas religion purifies parental love, and gives it a continuance which will never have an end.

Learn hence, my dear children, that your behaviour, unleſs you have heaven in your view, will be mean and unworthy. Earth has not a point, on which an immortal being can reſt: whatever it has to offer, muſt needs periſh with it; and whatſoever periſheth, is as nothing.

When

WHEN a ſoldier is thoroughly perſuaded of this truth, he is a thouſand times a better officer for it. He does not wait to be ſeen by men, in order to acquit himſelf with valour: he knows that he is ſeen of GOD, and that is ſufficient for him. A true Chriſtian is never faint-hearted, when he is doing his duty: he is perſuaded that religion has placed him in his poſt, that ſhe requires him to hazard his life for his King and Country, and he is prepared to obey her commands.

ALL my comfort, amidſt the ravages which infidelity is making, is, that you are of ſuch rank, as only to aſſociate with perſons of quality. Liberal minds ſeldom proteſt openly againſt religion: it is chiefly in the company of low perſons, or thoſe who have had no proper

education, that impious converſation prevails.

GOOD GOD! what pleaſure can a Chriſtian find, in ridiculing the ſacred truths of Chriſtianity? What credit can he gain, in reviling the religion of his fathers; in which he lives, and in which he expects to die? We admire thoſe letters, in which the Jew, the Turk, the Perſian, ſpeak of the worſhip of their reſpective deities, with tranſport, and enthuſiaſtic reverence. And do we ridicule a work, on the authority of which the Chriſtian's faith ſtands ſupported? What an inconſiſtency! what monſtrous abſurdity! If, my dear children, you could look into my ſoul, you would ſee how earneſtly I deſire that you ſhould render unto GOD the things which are GOD's; that you ſhould obſerve his law, reſpect his miniſters, and not tamely ſuf-

fer

fer wicked raillery to be levelled againſt any thing which relates to divine worſhip. The leaſt pleaſantry, upon ſo ſacred a ſubject, is almoſt always blaſphemy.

WHENEVER You approach as near to the end of your life, as I am at this time; you will, I hope, have as lively a ſenſe of that awful Deity, whom we are too apt to forget in the days of health, and in the vigour of life: his juſtice on one ſide, and his mercy on the other, will then engage all your thoughts, and all your admiration.

WHENEVER you can truly ſay you fear nothing but God; you will conſider the approach of death, only as an entrance on a ſtate of happineſs. A life full of crimes, and even a life that has been unprofitably ſpent, is a dreadful object to the eyes of a Chriſtian, at the point

of death. But obſerve, that the piety, which I am at preſent recommending to you, is only ſuch as is manly, rational, and ſolid; founded on the authority of the Goſpel, and recommended and inforced by the Chriſtian church, in every age and nation, in which Chriſtianity is known. Superſtition never yet made a good Chriſtian. It only expoſes religion to contempt, to make it conſiſt in thoſe frivolous ceremonies, which true piety diſclaims.

O! IF I had but the knowlege of thoſe great and holy men, whoſe names we juſtly venerate; I would paint true religion to my children in colours the moſt lively, and repreſent it in terms the moſt endearing that can be conceived. I would ſhew them, that the beauteous firmament itſelf is but a faint image of the ſpiritual purity of religion; and that

the

the ſoul, which it enlightens, is far ſuperior to the material heavens.—O thou Spirit of truth! deſcend into the hearts of my children; convincing them ſo thoroughly of the vanity of the world, that they may be attached to Thee alone! I would rather wiſh they ſhould expire in my preſence, than that they ſhould ever renounce their religion. It is their happineſs to be born within its influence: their anceſtors were firm believers of the truths of Chriſtianity; and with my lateſt breath I pray, that, above all other riches, they may poſſeſs the ineſtimable treaſures of ſubſtantial piety.

Excuse, my dear children, the irregularity of this conference: my language is the effuſion of a heart, which utters its ſentiments in a deſultory manner. The deſire I have of ſaying a thouſand things at the ſame time, creates a

confuſion of ideas; and this deſire terminates only in weak endeavours.

INDEED I have the moſt dreadful conflicts within myſelf: my body, though little better than an empty ſhadow, ſwallows up my ſoul, and abaſes it to the earth; it gives me no other proof of its exiſtence than my ſufferings; the pains I feel have an influence on every thought and expreſſion. But I comfort myſelf by reflecting, that this ſtate is only a paſſage to a better; and that the hour is at hand, when my gracious GOD will receive me into the arms of his mercy. How dear to me is that religion, which preſents ſuch happineſs to my view! What an enemy to his own peace is the man, who would diſcard his beſt friend, his ſupreme conſolation in this world!

WHAT I have ſaid to you on this important topic deſerves to be made the ſubject

ſubject of your moſt ſerious reflections; as well becauſe it is the language of truth itſelf, as becauſe it is the exhortation of a dying parent. How meanly would you think of me, if I were ſo regardleſs of your *firſt* concern, as, in theſe my laſt moments, to exhort you to be careful only to ſecure the bleſſings of the preſent life! The ſight of my pallid countenance, which is the very image of death, would ſhew you, that I ſhould be equally weak and wicked in wiſhing to deceive you; and that the world, with all its charms, is in reality nothing more than a dream which deceives us, and which paſſes away with incredible rapidity.

A LITTLE reflection will convince you that there is nothing but GOD and his religion, the continuance whereof we can enſure; and that every thing has an end,

except the dominion of virtue. Good heavens! in what a ſituation ſhould I find myſelf, if I had only reckoned upon this mortal life; if all my happineſs had centered within the circle of a few years! I ſhould ſee nothing before me but annihilation, or ſomething far more terrible. But, by the help of religion, my mind is raiſed up to GOD; and from the manſions of the grave I perceive a light ariſing, diffuſed by the mercy of that GOD, whoſe goodneſs is the ſource of my delight. This is my conſolation, and that of every Chriſtian: this alſo, my dear children, will be your comfort, if you faithfully obſerve the divine commandments.

You are by no means left at liberty to follow the dictates of your own paſſions, or to walk in the paths of unbelief. The education which you have received,

ceived, the advice of your father juſt before his death, and my admonitions under the ſame circumſtances, make you accountable for your conduct to your country, and to all mankind. They will liſten to you, they will watch you; and if your behaviour is unſuitable to the advantages, with which you have been diſtinguiſhed, you will be univerſally deſpiſed.

THUS it is that the world itſelf can take its revenge of you; and, indifferent as it may appear about religion, it will always be ready to take her part againſt you. Every one will be ready to cry out, how is it poſſible that perſons, ſo virtuouſly educated, ſhould give themſelves up to ſuch licentiouſneſs; ſurely their hearts muſt be more than ordinarily corrupt.

But you will not, I hope, be reſtrained altogether by this conſideration; an earneſt deſire to pleaſe God, in no reſpect degenerating from the honour of your anceſtors, will, I truſt, engage you to perſevere in the practice of your duty.

You have too juſt a ſenſe of this, to forget Him who hath made you; or to neglect to offer him, every morning and evening of your lives, the tribute of adoration and love; or to forſake the aſſemblies of thoſe holy perſons, who never fail to implore the aſſiſtance of heaven. It is only by debaſing ourſelves to a level with the brute creation, that we loſe the idea of God. How can we forget Him; in whom we live, and by whom we have our being? How can we fail to delight in the ſervices of Him, who is the author and fountain of all our honour and happineſs? How richly

richly do they deſerve the name of fools, who are regardleſs of the worſhip of GOD, and who affect to deſpiſe the ordinances of religion?

I AM not afraid, that you will be prejudiced againſt the true religion, by being told, that it abounds with incomprehenſible myſteries: common ſenſe will inform any one, that an infinite Being is a fathomleſs abyſs; and that his nature is unſearchable. But I fear leſt your paſſions ſhould ſeduce you: theſe only can perſuade you to believe, that Chriſtianity is not the work of GOD.

BUT let us draw the veil over an event, the very poſſibility of which is ſo dreadful: I had much rather perſuade myſelf that, like your forefathers, you will live in the fear of GOD; and that, like them, you will die in an humble hope of being admitted into his bleſſed preſence.

If

If you waited only for my death, before you declared in favour of infidelity, alas! how little would you gain by it! Will not your heart be equally open to that GOD who ſeeth you now, when I am removed out of your ſight? It is He, and not ſuch a poor worm of the earth as I am, that you ought to regard; that Being who is merciful to the good, but terrible to the ungodly.

O! HOW often hath the idea of his juſtice affrighted me! Even at this time, when I have a deep ſenſe of his mercy impreſſed upon my mind, the thoughts of my diſſolution, and the circumſtances which will attend it, make me afraid: the profuſion of tears, which my friends will ſhed, the ſolemn proceſſion, the mournful reſpect of my attendants, all ſerve to fill my weakened mind with awful apprehenſions. One while

while I ſee nothing but the Majeſty of the living GOD, and the inſignificance of the creature, which he is about to ſacrifice: at another time, with moſt dutiful ſubmiſſion I await the blow, which ſhall reduce me to my original duſt, as a tribute due to his ſovereign Majeſty.

How wonderful will be the inſtantaneous change in our ideas! How far beyond the power of reaſon to comprehend! It ſtands aſtoniſhed at the view of that immenſity, into which I am about to enter! Yet a moment——and GOD alone will either fill me with His glory, or overwhelm me with the terrors of His juſtice. What an alteration! All the kings in the univerſe muſt experience the ſame fate.

IT is not the terror of the grave, nor the horrible corruption which this body of

of mine is about to experience, nor that eternal oblivion to which I ſhall be conſigned, which affrights me: but that new world, which I ſee only as through a glaſs darkly, and of which we only know in part, even when we are dying; that ſtrange land, to which all generations are deſtined to go, and from which no one is permitted to return.

THIS, my dear children, is the object which ought to engage your principal attention, and not altogether the renown which you may acquire in arms, or the rank to which you may be advanced at court.

As for your mother, while you are all of you deeply engaged in the tumult of worldly affairs, ſhe perhaps——but why, gracious SAVIOUR! ſhould I diſquiet myſelf with uncertainty? I cannot be ignorant that Thy mercies are infinite

finite; and that heaven is open for the admiſſion of all, who ſincerely love and truſt in Thee.

O! MY children, the deareſt objects of my affection! it is to GOD himſelf that I recommend you: His Providence will guard your youth: it extends itſelf even to the moſt inconſiderable part of the creation. His love towards you will ſupply the loſs of your relations, which are now no more. No one can be ſo much your father, as He is: you will find Him to be ſuch, while you live; you will alſo experience His mercy in the hour of death. He is every where preſent; and on all occaſions: yet will He be no longer your's, but reject you for ever, if you forſake Him.

CON-

CONFERENCE XIX.

ON THE VANITY OF THE WORLD.

FOR three weeks our exemplary mother found herſelf ſomewhat better: at the end of which her appetite failed her, all at once; this, together with her loſs of ſleep, reduced her to the loweſt ſtate of weakneſs imaginable. Yet ſhe wiſhed to have one other opportunity of converſing with her children; tho' the inſtructions which ſhe had already given them were ſo full, as to leave hardly any thing, that was neceſſary, unſaid.

THE extreme weakneſs of my preſent ſtate, ſays ſhe, affords me an occaſion of

of ſpeaking to you on the vanity of all things in this world. Look at me with attention: ſee how dim my eyes appear; how emaciated my perſon, and what poſſeſſion death has already taken of me. This was the woman, that appeared not long ago with ſuch eclat; that was celebrated for her amiable qualities, as well as for her external accompliſhments. Here are the only remains of what ſhe was; a mere ſhadow—a nothing.

THIS ſituation has rendered me much more of a philoſopher, than all the books that were ever written on the ſubject could have done. Alas! whilſt I ſuffer, and even am dying by degrees, I have ſeen all thoſe objects gradually loſe their value, which my imagination raiſed far above their real worth. Pleaſures now appear to me only as mere illuſions, and honours as an empty vapour. Truth

ſeems every day to take me by the hand, and ſhew me the vanity of this world, and the emptineſs of every thing which it poſſeſſeth.

THE ſame effect is produced in me, which the autumn every year exhibits to our view: juſt as we then ſee the beauties of nature gradually diſappear, I have ſeen the grandeur of this world diminiſhed; its moſt valuable poſſeſſions debaſed, and all its ornaments ſtript off, as leaves from the trees by the winter's blaſt.

FALSE appearances dazzle our eyes, while we enjoy perfect health; every thing then bewitches us; every thing ſeduces us; every thing appears to us eternal in its duration. Scarcely hath a fit of ſickneſs ſeized us, but truth diſpels the charm, and recalls us to ourſelves; leaving us to behold nothing but a veil of darkneſs,

darkneſs, drawn over all that heretofore excited our admiration.

In proportion as I draw nearer to my grave, the horizon grows darker; and thoſe entertainments, which once enchanted me, thoſe balls which charmed me, thoſe aſſemblies which intoxicated my mind and my ſenſes, ſeem only phantoms, of which I have been the dupe, which, on a moment's reflection, diſappear.

It is wonderful to obſerve, what an indifference for life a tedious illneſs gives us: how it detaches us from thoſe falſe pleaſures, which have no other reality in them, than the remorſe and wearineſs which they occaſion. Providence almoſt always interpoſes itſelf to undeceive us; and to convince us, that in Him alone all our admiration, and all our reſearches, ought to center.

COULD you have thought, my dear children, that I ſhould, in the ſpace of a few months, become an object ſo different from myſelf: an emblem of all human miſeries, and even a frightful ſpectre! Perhaps, indeed, you have not courage enough to behold me: at leaſt, look beyond thoſe ſhadows of death, which ſurround me. Dwell not on thoſe melancholy objects, which offend the ſight; but amidſt thoſe ſad ruins, which my body has undergone, ſeparate that heart which is ſtill entire, and loves you with inexpreſſible tenderneſs; that alone has not yet felt the ravages of death. But alas! like the wretched ſkeleton that ſurrounds it, that alſo muſt ſoon return to the duſt, from which it was originally formed.

IT will only be my immortal ſpirit, of which we are regardleſs amidſt the buſtle

buſtle of the world, that will conſtitute the whole of my exiſtence; 'till the time, when my body ſhall be reanimated. Alas! the only part of me, which hath any ſtability or duration, is that, which I ſo long ſuffered to be utterly forgotten: and all thoſe flattering objects, which heretofore ſoothed my vanity, are now departed as a dream.

WHAT folly is it, my children, to be ſo ſtrongly attached to objects of ſuch a tranſitory nature! to put one's confidence in things, which have only the appearance of good! Alas! if all the moſt captivating ſcenes in the world could be now exhibited to my view; had I now the diſpoſal of crowns and treaſures, what advantage could I receive from them? Could they one moment arreſt the hand of death? Could they give the ſmalleſt degree of ſtrength to

my bod, or beauty to my perſon? And, even if they were capable of producing ſuch wonders, would they be of any continuance? Every thing here below, not excepting even life itſelf, is but a dream. How many great men have you ſeen paſs away! Tho' their glory appeared immortal; we now ſcarcely remember, that they ever exiſted. Death hath deſtroyed not only their bodies, but their very name and their remembrance.

O! HOW low doth human greatneſs ſink, when the curtain is drawn up, and we ſee only the Majeſty of GOD! It is nothing more than an imperceptible point, loſt in the abyſs of immenſity.

I HAVE lived in the ſociety of perſons, among whom my fortune, rank, and dignity attracted many admirers; when the

the vivacity of pleaſure intoxicated my heart, and charmed my ſenſes: but all that glory is departed as a ſhadow, and the ſocieties themſelves are ſunk into nothing. A few years have effected this ſtrange revolution: time is a pitileſs deſtroyer, which is daily conſuming every thing that is mortal, and by degrees annihilates itſelf.

O HEAVENS! what a vacancy appears before my eyes; when I review the number of perſons within the circle of my own acquaintance, who are now no more: enough almoſt to form a world! You will very ſoon add me to the number: my ſlender voice, my emaciated figure, my exhauſted frame, all unitedly declare, that I have nothing to expect within the compaſs of the univerſe, but five or ſix feet of earth.

THE ſame lot awaits you all, at ſome little diſtance of time. Your youth will paſs away like a roſe; and, for ought we know, you are this very moment on the brink of deſtruction. The grave receives as many young perſons, as old: every creature is tributary to death; he is an unrelenting creditor, who ſuffers no one to be at reſt.

How ſtrangely ſhould I have been deceived, if I had reckoned upon threeſcore or fourſcore years! By the blaſt of the Almighty the bloom of my life is faded away; and I am brought to contemplate my death, in a ſtate of extreme weakneſs: and ought I to complain of this ſtate? I, who, like other human creatures, was born to die; and whoſe diſſipation and folly have deſerved a large portion of the cup of bitterneſs and ſorrow.

It is only by the tenderneſs of my affection, that you can know me to be your mother. Sickneſs has ſo entirely effaced every line of my perſon, as to render me quite a ſtranger to my own family, and to all my attendants: they look ſhy upon me; they are afraid to come near me; and it is only their exceeding great affection for me, that gets the better of their unwillingneſs to approach me. I am very far from blaming them; for I have much ado even to recollect what I once was.

It is only this perſpective, that diſcovers truth to us: while we ſee nothing but the gaudy ſplendor of the world, we live in the midſt of error and deluſion. But as ſoon as we reflect upon our frailty, we turn towards ourſelves, and towards heaven; we penetrate even into the re-

How

ality of things, and do not ſuffer ourſelves to be dazzled by appearances.

How thankful ought I to be, that death approaches me ſo gradually, as inſenſibly to reconcile me to it, and withdraw my attention from every ſeducing object! I paſs my days in reflecting on the ſources of my life, which are exhauſted; in reading thoſe books, which remind me of my latter end: for it is right that you ſhould know, that I never ſpare myſelf on this ſubject. Every morning I take my looking-glaſs, to ſee to what ſtate death reduces us; and often, very often I am reminded, that my coffin is juſt ready to receive me.

THERE it is, my children, that very ſoon your fond mother, without either ſenſe or motion, and without any proſpect of returning to this world again, will be deſtined to moulder in the boſom

ſom of corruption. It is a fearful thought!—But I will ſpare your tenderneſs on a ſubject too affecting for you, as well as for myſelf. You are not ignorant, (indeed who is?) that this diſmal end is the lot of all men; and that in ſpite of the pleaſures, which delude them, in ſpite of the falſe glory which dazzles them, they muſt fall into the depths of horror and oblivion.

DREADFUL as the darkneſs of the tomb may appear, it has enlightened me more than the brightneſs of the ſun: this only ſhews me periſhable objects; that diſcovers to me the excellence of my ſpiritual part, and the majeſty of my GOD, which before were in a manner concealed from me. By the help of the light which that imparts to me, I have gone through the whole world, and have diſcovered much vanity and miſery; I have

have ſeen nothing more effectually inſtructive than death and dying perſons, burials and epitaphs.

See all that remains to me of earthly greatneſs: a ſhort inſcription ſerves to inform others, that we once lived, and are now no more; and even this is effaced by length of time. The marble itſelf decays; and the eternity of the Supreme Being triumphs over the nothingneſs of man.

I have ſaid enough I hope, my dear children, to convince you, that I do not wiſh for inſcriptions, or magnificent titles on my tomb: I am nothing more than duſt, and to the ſame element am I returning, from which I was formed. And can dry bones reduced to duſt, and mouldering in corruption, deſerve a panegyric? O! where ſhall we ſet bounds

to

to our vanity, if it does not ſink into nothing at the very ſight of a grave!

I THINK you muſt have opportunities enough of diſcovering, that I am too thoroughly ſenſible of the vanity of the world, to wiſh to ſurvive myſelf, in wretched praiſes inſcribed on my monument: rather let me atone for my errors and my follies by an eternal oblivion. Heaven would arm itſelf againſt me, if I thought of decorating a miſerable ſepulchre; it would only ſerve to perpetuate my pride beyond the limits of this preſent life, if I ſhould attempt by improper ornaments to alter the very nature of that, which in itſelf is nothing but miſery and corruption.

ALL that I require of you, my beloved friends, is to come ſometimes to the place of my interment; not merely to ſhed a few tears over my cold and ſenſe-

ſenſeleſs aſhes, but to recall to your minds the inſtructions which I have given you. That awful ſolemnity, that mournful ſilence, which prevails in the neighbourhood of ſepulchres, will give you leiſure and inclination to meditate ſeriouſly on all that I have ſaid to you. The repreſentation of death is the beſt ſchool, wherein we can learn to live as we ought; to raiſe the ſoul from earthly things, and to fix it upon GOD.

PROMISE me, that you will ſometimes viſit that inſtructive ſpot; I invite you thither. And if you love me well enough to have your minds properly ſtored with the precepts which I have delivered to you, you will conſider me as actually preſent with you there; I ſhall have no other method of appearing to you, or converſing with you.

ALAS!

ALAS! my poor children, what a melancholy taſk am I impoſing on you! if the world knew it, it would be ſilly enough to treat it with contempt: but my affection prompts me to communicate to you this uſeful and important ſecret. Leave the world to act for itſelf; and never liſten to it in any matter, which concerns your duty. It is fond of nothing, which does not contribute to its amuſement; and eſteems nothing, but what flatters its taſte for vanity and pleaſure.

WHAT an impaſſable gulph is about to interpoſe itſelf betwixt the world and me! Yet a little while, and I ſhall neither know what ſcenes of entertainment are exhibited; nor what revolutions take place in it: yet a very little while, and all ideas of the ſucceſſion of months and years will be utterly loſt.

But

But that which gives me ſome concern is, that this ſpot of earth, on which you remain, will be loſt in that immenſity which awaits me; ſo that I ſhall be totally unacquainted with your conduct or your deſtination. What a change muſt be wrought in my exiſtence! What a revolution in my ſentiments! Is it poſſible to conceive, that an inſtant ſhould produce ſuch aſtoniſhing effects? At preſent I cannot properly be ſaid to belong either to this world, or the other: I am like a traveller divided between two different ways; and death, in the twinkling of an eye, will put an end to my uncertainty. One while I feel myſelf reluctant; at another time I deſire the ſtroke: ſtrange alternative! on one ſide, is the proſpect of ſupreme felicity; on the other, the pain of being ſeparated from that which is moſt dear to me.

I DOUBT not, my children, but my love for you will be conſidered as romantic; and indeed, I believe it riſes to an uncommon height. But this at leaſt I am ſure of, that I am not miſtaken in the advice, which I have given you: it is the language of truth; it is the voice of a dying friend, that you have heard.

WE are continually running with eagerneſs to a new tragedy: we are filled with the ſad ſcenes which it preſents; and we find a degree of pleaſure, even in the tears which it excites. Here, my children, is a ſcene yet more affecting: we have no recourſe to fiction, here: the chief character in this tragedy is a mother really expiring; the ſentence is pronounced, and is on the very point of being executed.

I HAVE for ſome days felt myſelf more weak than uſual, and find that my life is now making its eſcape from this tottering frame; nothing indeed ſupports me but my tenderneſs for you: hitherto it has detained my fugitive ſpirit, but at length it will be forced to yield.

COME hither, that I may embrace you; if you have the courage to join your lips to an expiring body, and to bathe in a flood of tears. Alas! I have nothing but tears to give you; the weakneſs of my body, and the ſtrength which yet remains, deſtroy my powers of utterance.

How ſad the ſeparation! What a mournful farewell! The tenderneſs of my affection reminds me of the hour, in which I brought you into the world: but there is this ſad difference; that I this day behold you, to ſee you no more.

Support

Support me, gracious Father, in this dreadful trial: ſuffer me not to ſink under the burthen of maternal tenderneſs. I know, that I ought to forget every thing for thy ſake: and yet my heart never ceaſes to think of my children. Dear as they are to me, efface them for ever from my memory; if this love either is, or will be imputed to me as a fault.

But, what am I ſaying? Good God! thou knoweſt, that I only love them for thy ſake; and that I wiſh them no other happineſs, than that which ariſes from obedience to thy law. My only reaſon for wiſhing to live among them a few years, had it been thy gracious will, is to eſtabliſh in them the love of that which is good: this it is, which makes my ſeparation from my children a thouſand times more painful,

than the approaching ſeparation of my ſoul from my body. See! there they are! Yet do I ſee, and hear them! Yet are they——

But what pain and diſtraction is this, which ſeizes me! the pleaſure I now have in them is but a momentary gratification; yet a little while, and there will not be a perſon upon earth, who will love them with a thouſandth part of the tenderneſs with which their mother loves them. O! how I am loſt in the depth of ſuch reflections!

CON-

CONFERENCE XX.

ON RELATIVE DUTY.

OUR excellent mother, having received a viſit from her brother in law, and having converſed with him for half an hour, deſired he would permit her to introduce her children to him: when, in the language of the tendereſt affection, ſhe thus addreſſed them.

THIS, my dear Children, is the perſon, whom henceforth you are to conſider as your parent: as you are connected with him by the ties of conſanguinity, I beſeech you to attach yourſelves to him by the obligations of in-

violable friendſhip. The love you have for me, which is about to expire, when I ſhall no longer exiſt in this world, ought to be transferred to your uncle: to his favour I recommend you; no one can give you better advice than he can.

THEN turning herſelf towards her brother, ſhe addreſſed him thus: O my dear brother, you who continually remind me of my excellent huſband, and in whom I have always found ſuch ſentiments, as one ſo nearly related to him may eaſily be ſuppoſed to entertain, have pity on theſe children. Pity their tender age; pity their orphan-ſtate, when I ſhall be taken from them. My days are ended; my life is but a blaſt; and nothing remains to me, but the regret of having wretchedly mis-ſpent it.

O! THAT

O! THAT I could now be aſſured by you, that my wiſhes would be accompliſhed: what would become of theſe unhappy creatures in the midſt of a moſt dangerous world, if they were not bleſt with your friendſhip! In them, my dear brother, recollect both their father, whom you affectionately loved, and their mother, who has no power of utterance beyond ſighs and tears.

MY heart is inexpreſſibly affected at this dreadful ſeparation, even as it were, from myſelf: as I before obſerved, it is more terrible to me than the horrors of the grave.

FORGIVE me, gracious Lord! Thou knoweſt, that even in my dreams, even in the moſt ſolemn acts of devotion, even in the prayers addreſſed to thy heavenly Majeſty, the remembrance of my family continually interpoſed itſelf, to diſ-

tract my mind. In vain have I wiſhed to have my whole attention fixed upon Thee: in vain have I endeavoured to become wholly abſorbed by the contemplation of Thine infinite perfections. My thoughts perpetually recur to thoſe objects of my love, which Thou haſt given me, and art now about to ſeparate from me.

ALAS! my dear children, I feel that I have much leſs fortitude than I appear to have: one moment's reflection on your ſad condition, one ſingle thought on the ſubject of our ſeparation, overwhelms my ſoul with the deepeſt ſorrow. My mind hath but too much ſenſibility at preſent: yet a little while, and no viſible object will affect it. Theſe, my dear children, are the laſt ſtruggles of my affection: my heart at this moment ſeems to collect every thing that is moſt tender

tender and affectionate, in order to bid you an everlaſting farewell.

At theſe words ſhe melted into tears; when her brother-in-law anſwered;

"No, my ſiſter, God will not be offended with that tenderneſs, for which you blame yourſelf: He is goodneſs itſelf; and the holy ſcriptures dwell parparticularly on the ſubject of his love. If your affection for your children were merely carnal and earthly, the caſe would be different; but your love for them is that of a Chriſtian parent, who is chiefly ſolicitous for their eternal ſalvation.

"Make yourſelf as eaſy as poſſible on their account; you entruſt them to my care, and I will not be regardleſs of their welfare. I ſhall conſider them as my own children; in me they ſhall at once

once experience the authority of a father, and the affection of a mother; and I verily believe we ſhall none of us forget the confidence you repoſe in us. Comfort yourſelf, therefore, with reflecting, that you leave us only preparing ourſelves to follow you; ſince this life, however long it may be accounted, is in reality no more than a ſtate of momentary exiſtence.

CON-

CONFERENCE XXI.

ON KINDNESS TO DOMESTICS.

THOUGH our exemplary mother appeared to have exhauſted her whole power of utterance, as well as every topic of inſtruction, in theſe admonitions to her children; yet one ſubject remained, ariſing from the care ſhe took to recommend to their kindneſs her family and dependents.

WHEN they were all together, ſhe ſaid to her ſons, in a voice that could with difficulty be heard: "I charge you to be kind to theſe my domeſtics, who have always been ſtrongly attached to me.

me. Some of them ſerved your father, and others have given me every proof of the moſt dutiful regard. I have not forgotten them in my will; but that is not ſufficient. They have a demand on you for kindneſſes, as friends in diſtreſs; for it is in this point of view, that I would have you conſider them: they are ſprung from the ſame origin, and are deſtined to the ſame end with ourſelves.

How unreaſonable is that pride, which the world affects; and which makes us look down with contempt on perſons, in every eſſential reſpect, like ourſelves.

NEVER forget, that we diſhonour and debaſe human nature, whenever we treat any perſon with diſdain, merely becauſe his external appearance is meaner than our own. Your names, when you were baptized, were entered in the ſame regiſter with thoſe of the pooreſt; and the duſt,

duſt, to which you will one day be reduced, may aſſure you that the ſame deſtiny of mortality awaits us all.

AM I not going to be mixed with the loweſt and meaneſt of my fellow-creatures? Shall I not be reduced to a level with the humbleſt ſlave? Thus doth death caſt down the high looks of the proud.

YOU will indeed act agreeably to my wiſhes, when you treat your domeſtics with kindneſs; when you watch over their morals, and take care of their health. GOD knows that even at the time, when pride and a love of the world fed my vanity, I was never altogether unmindful of them; nor ever ſpoke to them in a haughty ſtile: if I ever did, here they are, let them witneſs againſt me."

To theſe words her domeſtics could only reply with ſighs and lamentations; and her children, overwhelmed with grief, ſaid with interrupted accents:

"O! THAT your days could be prolonged, in proportion to the ardency of of our deſires! You ſhould perceive, in our ſentiments, a perfect tranſcript of your own. You ſhould then ſee and know, that nothing can ever remove from our hearts the love with which they are filled towards you, or the maxims with which you have ſo richly ſtored our minds.

"OUR life will from this time be a life of bitterneſs and ſorrow; the blow, with which we are about to be overwhelmed, threatens us——O! heavens! ſpare"———

LET us, my dear children, for the laſt time, mix our tears together. The moment

moment approaches; when, inſenſible to your cries, I ſhall no longer behold this earth, or be intereſted in what is paſſing upon it: I ſhall not even have the conſolation of feeling that tender anxiety, that pleaſing pain, which I now ſuffer on your account.

YOUR uncle will communicate to you the contents of my will. I have too good an opinion of you, to think you will diſapprove of the legacies, which I have bequeathed to the poor, and to ſome perſons, with whoſe merit I am well acquainted."

A FEW days after this laſt interview, her diſorder made ſuch a progreſs, that, being at the very point of death, ſhe received a viſit from her children; who, with the tendereſt effuſions of grief, requeſted her laſt bleſſing.

THEN,

THEN, juſt opening her dying lips, ſhe with the utmoſt difficulty ſaid:

"THE hand of death is upon me; your mother is no more.—May the Lord receive you under his protection! with my laſt breath I earneſtly beſeech Him to *pardon* ME, and to *bleſs* YOU. You now ſee little more of me, than a darticle of duſt, about to be recommitted to its parcel-earth! Such is the end of human greatneſs: adieu! my dear, my affectionate children, adieu for ever.

MY grave is opening—eternity commences—Gracious Lord, receive my ſpirit.

HER eyes ſtill looked for her children, till ſhe expired.—Thus died this incomparable motner, the remembrance of whom religion will long preſerve.

HER daughter ſurvived her only a ſhort time. But her ſons, ever mindful of

of the inſtructions which they had received, did honour to the memory of their parents, by lives worthy of their birth and their education.

FINIS.

SERMONS,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED

BY

S. GLASSE, D. D. F. R. S.

TWO Sermons in behalf of the Marine Society.

A Sermon at the opening of Clapham Church.

A Sermon in behalf of the Magdalen Charity.

A Sermon at the Muſic-Meeting, Gloceſter.

A Sermon in favour of Sunday Schools.

A Sermon at the Meeting of the Charity Children, St. Paul's.